

525
A2479
P6
916
Mackay, Constance
D'Arcy.

The forest princess,
and other masques

PRINCESS
AND OTHER MASQUES
BY
CONSTANCE DARCY MACKAY



FORSYTH LIBRARY

Circulation Division

For Miss Mary Ann Smith

CL 525
Bo A2473
Ac 86
916
12 M15

Mackay, Constance
D'Arcy.

The forest princess,
and other masques

slip; otherwise the Librarian is required to collect a fine for overtime.

21-3024

4-46-5M



2 1765 0054 2135 2

WITHDRAWN

THE FOREST PRINCESS AND OTHER MASQUES

BY

CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

Author of "Costumes and Scenery for Amateurs," "The Beau
of Bath," etc., etc.



NEW YORK
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
1916

72
Masques (plays)
See contents

COPYRIGHT, 1916,
BY
HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

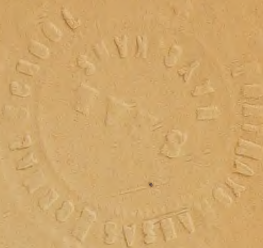
Published August, 1916

No performance of these masques may be given without full acknowledgment to the author and publishers. Acknowledgment should be made to read as follows: "By Constance D'Arcy Mackay; from *The Forest Princess and Other Masques*; Copyright, 1916, by Henry Holt and Company; Produced by arrangement with the publishers."

Amateurs may produce the masques in this volume without charge. Professional actors *must* apply for acting rights to the author, in care of the publishers.

June, 1922

812
M 15f



PREFACE

THIS volume contains six Masques designed for community use. Some can be produced out of doors, and others are especially adapted for indoor production. Notes on Masque music, Masque costumes, and the Revival of the Masque are also included.

Thanks are due to *The Bellman*, *The Drama Quarterly*, *The Delineator*, *The Woman's Magazine*, *The Churchman*, and *The Ladies' World* for permission to reprint material that has appeared in their pages.

As this volume goes to press many of the Masques it contains are in rehearsal, in colleges, cities, and outdoor theatres. Two of the Masques have already had production. *The Forest Princess* was first produced at Mount Holyoke College, Mount Holyoke, Mass.; and *The Gift of Time* was first produced at the New York Y.W.C.A. (main branch) as a Christmas celebration, with an augmented cast and a chorus of fifty voices.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE	I
THE FOREST PRINCESS. (<i>A Masque in Three Acts</i>)	II
THE GIFT OF TIME. (<i>A Christmas Masque</i>) . .	53
A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION	69
THE MASQUE OF POMONA	103
<u>A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS</u>	117
THE SUN GODDESS. (<i>A Masque of Old Japan</i>)	149
MASQUE COSTUMES	171
MASQUE MUSIC	177

THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE

THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE

“Shake off your heavy trance
And leap into a dance
Such as no mortals use to tread,
Fit only for Apollo
To play to, for the moon to lead,
And all the stars to follow.”

This lyric from *The Dance of the Stars* might be used as a motto to express the nation-wide delight and steadily increasing interest in community drama that is felt from one end of our country to the other—a drama of the people, by the people, for the people, that is related to and yet apart from the art of the theatre in that commercialism does not dictate its rise and progress.

All over the country, in cities and villages, in manufacturing centers and college towns the urge of community drama is felt. It fills our parks with folk-dancing and festival, our colleges and settlements with plays, indoors and out; and our cities with glowing pageantry. Robin Hood and a breath of Sherwood challenges the grayness of the slum: on village green the lure and grace of Colonial days is made to live again. Fairies are out beneath the moon—the matter-

4 THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE

of-fact is for the time being blown away by the enchanted winds of fancy. People are no longer content to be audience: they must be participants also. For, above all, community drama seeks to give full outlet to individual as well as community expression, co-ordinating the arts of acting, dancing, pantomime, designing, singing. Such co-ordination is the particular province of the Masque, the lyrical form of drama "occupying a middle place between a pageant and a play."

Medieval Masques were used to entertain sovereigns, to celebrate weddings, or to welcome heroes. To-day the Masque is used as a means of civic influence, or of social, political, or artistic enlightenment. It runs the gamut from mysticism to humanitarianism, from fantasy to sober truth.

Four cities stand out as leaders of the modern Masque movement in this country. These cities are San Francisco, Chicago, St. Louis, and New York.

The Masques of the Bohemian Club of San Francisco, given in the Redwood Grove, and the Masques of the Chicago Art Institute are already justly celebrated. The former are outdoor Masques: the latter indoor. In both cases they have been Masques of poetic vision and fantasy.

For Masques on a great scale, using thousands of people where the Bohemian Club and the Chicago Art Institute only used hundreds, there have been two Masques of wonderful beauty and significance, the

Masque of St. Louis, and the Shakespearian Tercentenary Masque in New York City. Both these Masques were civic Masques on a huge scale. Both employed every art of the community, acting, singing, dancing, pantomime, costume and scene designing, and superb stage management.

In these various Masque productions some are ornate and expensive; while others that are as simple and direct as *The Masque of Quetzal's Bowl*, given by the Art Institute of Chicago at an inconsiderable outlay, and yet with fine effect.

Born of the desire for community drama that glowed in the buoyant times of Queen Elizabeth the Masque flourished in her day. The word, originally of Arab origin, came into the English language through the French in the early part of the sixteenth century, and in accordance with the usual English fashion of treating French words was spelled *Mask* or *Masque*. The French spelling, *Masque*, came into use about the end of the century, and it was to this spelling that rare Ben Jonson, greatest of all Masque writers, adhered.

The Masque was (and is) largely allegorical. As the pageant deals mostly with actualities, the Masque deals with symbols, with the realm of allegory, romance, and faëry.

In olden times the most salient characteristic of the Masque was the dance. To this even acting and music were, for the time, subordinate. This dance-enhancement was the direct result of the love of dancing

6 THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE

that was as widespread then as now. From the earliest periods a dance in masquerade was one of the favorite amusements of the European courts. Apart from its chief characteristic—that of dancing—the Masque, chameleon-like, reflected in its small compass the most popular dramatic forms of its day. It was heroic, comic, fanciful or prophetic, according to the mood of the times. It mirrored the topics that were uppermost in people's minds, whether social or political. In the early stages of its growth it was full of the naïve seriousness of the morality plays with definitely labeled figures such as *Riches*, *Poverty*, *Envy*, *Love*. But people wanted something gayer than the morality plays, something in which they themselves could participate, and as a result of this wish we have one of the earliest forms of community drama—medieval Masques, in which dances were of two kinds: stately measures performed by the professional Masquers; and the revels—merry, high-spirited dances including *levantos*, galliards, and courantos *in which both actors and audience took part!* Kings and Queens felt the spell of participation. One of the first examples of the Masque in France was in the reign of Henry Third. This was the *Ballet Comique de la Royne* (named after Queen Louise of Lorraine who took part in it). This Masque was written for the marriage of the Queen's sister with the Duc de Joyeuse, in 1581. The plot was woven from the story of Circe and her enchantments, and the principal dancers were the Queen and her ladies. That the costumes and settings were of the

THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE 7

utmost magnificence goes almost without saying; for in those days vast sums were willingly expended to bring the Masque to perfection. This was true of both France and England. In Nichol's *Progresses of James First* is noted that the sum of six thousand pounds was the average cost of the production of a court Masque. Inigo Jones, the artist who worked with Ben Jonson devising "neat artifices" for the stage setting of Masques, was the Rheinhart of his day—a master in his superb sense of color and effective grouping. Wonderful lighting effects—pillars against the evening sky, golden shells that opened to display slumbering elves, enchanted grottos, the walls of battlements—nothing was too difficult for his ardent (and successful!) experimenting. Thus the Masque brought forward the first great scenic artist, and the first actual attempt at scenery. In the play audiences were still content to behold a placard reading: "This is a Wood": but in the Masque they demanded to see the wood itself. Special attention was given to costuming, perhaps because for the first time women participated equally with men in drama where formerly men played all the parts. The Masque brought the actress to the stage and with her an enlivened sense of dress. Juno in pale blue, with a border of peacock feathers painted on her robe, the eyes of the feathers set in jewels—what fine lady would not play the goddess under such inducements?

The first English Masque was *Cynthia's Revels* by Ben Jonson, produced in 1600. Then came Samuel

8 THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE

Davie's *Vision of the Twelve Goddesses*, produced at Hampton Court, January 8, 1604. After that appeared what was from the literary point of view one of the most beautiful Masques ever written—Jonson's *Masque of the Wedding of Lord Viscount Haddington*. Other famous Masques were Francis Beaumont's *Masque of the Inner Temple and Gray's Inn*, *The Masque of Flowers* (*Anonymous*), and Jonson's *Masque of Queens*.

From 1604 to 1640 the Masque reigned supreme, then, for no discoverable reason, faded from the English stage, and was seen no more until the enthusiasm of our own day revived it—but with certain differences. The dance is now but a part of the Masque, the Masque-story or Masque-message the chief end in view. And this story or message may be conveyed by the most ornate or the very simplest means. Here again is a change. No Masque could be devised in the old days without extravagant expenditure, while at the present time, the Masque shows the direct influence of the new staging which lays stress on the essentials of line and color, and which desires to obtain the greatest effect of simplicity and beauty for the least outlay. A natural greensward may be the scene of an outdoor Masque, or draped curtains may form the background of an indoor Masque. To suggest is as much as to portray. Pageantry is of necessity more or less expensive: while a *simple* Masque can be within the reach of every one. Colleges, clubs, church guilds, settlements, cities, and villages large or small—all can par-

THE REVIVAL OF THE MASQUE 9

ticipate. For the keynote of community drama is participation. And in contradistinction to medieval Masques that required marvelous scenery and ornate costumes, modern Masques may be as magnificent or as simple as requirements dictate.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(A Masque)

CHARACTERS

THE KING
THE QUEEN
THE FOREST PRINCESS
PRINCE ALADORE
PRINCE ULRIC
FIRST LADY-IN-WAITING
SECOND LADY-IN-WAITING
FIRST LORD OF THE COURT
SECOND LORD OF THE COURT
DAME MORA
LITTLE YNOL
A TRAVELER
A HERALD
FIRST MAIDEN
SECOND MAIDEN
THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE
THE SPIRIT OF THE CHESTNUT TREE
THE SPIRIT OF THE SILVER BIRCH
THE SPIRIT OF THE ELM
THE SPIRIT OF THE LARCH
THE SPIRIT OF THE AILANTHUS
THE SPIRIT OF THE WILLOW
THE SPIRIT OF THE ASH
THE SPIRIT OF THE ASPEN
THE SPIRIT OF THE EVERGREEN
THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE
THE SPIRIT OF THE POPLAR
SWAMP OAK, a witch.

Peasants, shepherds, vine-dressers, lords, ladies, pages,
harpers, peasant musicians. Other Tree Spirits.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

ACT I

The scene of Act I is that used throughout the whole Masque. A cleared space in a glade with trees, right, left, and background suggesting deeper woods.

In the center of the stage a white marble seat with soft discolorings of brown and green where rain and moss have set their markings. The seat is long and shallow, with a curved back. Just behind it rises a square white column topped with a lamp-like bowl in which incense may be burned. This is a forest shrine, and like the marble seat, it also is of marble, and weather-stained.

Down stage, toward right, the trunk of a fallen tree. It is cloaked with vines and moss.

A trumpet-call, sweet and silver-shrill, blows in the distance, and announces the beginning of the Masque.

Enter from right Dame Mora, a sweet-faced peasant woman, and her small son Ynol, a blithe child who walks with dancing steps.

YNOL
(eagerly)

What shall we see?

DAME MORA

The court, in cloth of gold,
 'And humble folk like us. From byre and fold
 The shepherds come. The vinedressers, leaf-crowned,
 And pretty pages; herd-boys who are browned
 With summer sun; and maids who milk the kine,
 Damsels with garlands, lords and ladies fine.

[Ynol looks off excitedly, and then turns to his mother for more.]

All these, my Ynol. And when runes are said
 The Spirits of the Trees, engarlanded,
 May come from out the forest depths. I pray
 That we may see them here upon this day.

[Dame Mora speaks gravely, with a touch of reverence in her voice; but Ynol is all eagerness.]

YNOL

I pray so, too!

[He looks toward one of the trees.]

I would that I might see
 The Spirit that doth dwell in yonder tree.

[He takes a step or two toward the tree and then comes back to his mother.]

And shall I see the dances?

DAME MORA

That you will.
 Be a good child, my Ynol. Sit you still.

YNOL

(Sings, before he throws himself on the grass beside his mother)

*Gentle neighbor called the grass
Very lightly will I pass.
Sweet companion, called a flower,
I will rest me here an hour!*

[Another full-drawn note is blown on the trumpets. A Herald appears in background and comes forward as the Traveler enters from left.]

THE TRAVELER

What festival is this the trumpets blow?
I am a traveler and I fain would know
What revelry is here.

THE HERALD

Highest and least
Our good King bids to a great christening feast.
And strangers also are most welcome, sir.

THE TRAVELER

I would that I might stay. Unless I err
It is some rosy lordling that ye christen?

YNOL

(piping up)

Nay, sir, a Princess!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

DAME MORA

(reproving)

Child, be still and listen

When older folk are speaking. Mind your tongue.

[To the Traveler.]

Your pardon, sir.

THE TRAVELER

Good dame, the lad is young.

That's pardon in itself. *[To Herald]* And so you say

A Princess will be christened here to-day?

THE HERALD

(with pride)

Aye, sir, a Princess who is fairly born.

THE TRAVELER

(amazed)

How say you?

THE HERALD

Sir, upon a certain morn

Within this forest, Spirits of the Trees,

(Whose voices you may hear in every breeze

That blows through ash and thorn)

Summoned the court. We came. And dazzling bright

Upon that altar blazed a faëry light.

THE TRAVELER

(more and more amazed)

A faëry light?

THE HERALD

Aye, sir, that altar shone
With magic splendor. And when it was gone
And we could see with our be-dazzled eyes,
There on the altar a small Princess lies,
A faëry child.

THE TRAVELER

And has she faëry power?

THE HERALD

Nay, she became a human child the hour
That our good King and Queen proclaimed that she
Should Princess of their forest kingdom be.

THE TRAVELER

'Tis passing strange!

THE HERALD

Therefore the Queen and King
Have bidden to this fair babe's christening
The Spirits of the Trees, that they may bless
With magic talismans this sweet Princess,
So that no evil thing may hold in thrall
Our Forest Princess, as we love to call
This wondrous child; for we are forest folk
Forest encompassed, bounden to no yoke,
And loving freedom.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE TRAVELER

Would I might remain
To see such revelry, but I am fain
To reach an inn by sunset.

THE HERALD

Then good speed,
Sir Traveler, and store of fortune's mead!
[*The Traveler bows and exits, right. Ynol,
feeling less restraint, springs up and dances
gaily.*

YNOL

(singing)

*Blithe companion breeze,
Roving where you please,
I should like to find
Where the long roads wind.*
[*From the background in colors dully gorgeous
as a missal book the court appears, a pied
procession of orange, deep blue, and purple.
First come two heralds. Then the King and
Queen. Then a lady of the court bearing
the Princess in a golden cradle from which
trail rich stuffs, purple and cloth of gold.
Two young bards, each with a harp, come
next, and after them other lords and ladies
of the court. The King and Queen seat
themselves center, the lady with the Princess*

standing beside them. All through the processional entrance of the court music plays. As soon as the King and Queen are seated, from left come a group of peasants, shepherds, and vine-dressers. With them comes a rustic musician with his lute. One by one the peasant groups, in warm earth colors, brown, plum, lichen gray, come forward with their offerings. The shepherds bring sheepskins of snowy whiteness. The vine-dressers bear great wooden bowls of richly-colored fruits, wound with vine leaves, which they offer. The peasants come forward with some flowers, and scarlet cloth woven by their own hands. The King and Queen thank them graciously in pantomime. The pages hold the presents after they are presented. The music that has played faintly all through this scene ceases, and the King rises and speaks.

THE KING

Subjects be welcomed.

We give you hearty greeting. Glad are we

To have you join with us in revelry.

Pages, strew garlands! Bards, let music wake!

Dancers, a measure tread for joy's own sake!

[The pages toss some rose leaves on the grass.

The bards and the peasant musician begin to play a jocund air with a peasant swing.

There follow three dances, one by the peas-

THE FOREST PRINCESS

ants, one by the shepherds and shepherdesses, and one by the vine-dressers, all in gay festival spirit. At the end of the dance they form groups at right and left. The space in the center of the stage is left clear. The King and Queen rise. The cradle, with the Princess, is placed on the seat, folds of purple and gold falling about it. The King and Queen stand at left.

THE KING

(including both court and peasants in his speech of welcome)

We bid you welcome to this christening feast.

We celebrate a rite that hath not ceased

Since first our walls were builded. [*Indicates cradle*]

Here ye see

The small excuse for all our revelry,

Our newly christened Princess. On glad feet

The hours have danced since dawn. Yet incomplete

'Are all our revels till there have appeared

The Spirits of the Trees to us endeared

By many a magic gift and benison.

[*To Herald*]

Speak, herald. Hath my will in this been done?

Has the behest I gave you been fulfilled?

THE HERALD

(falling on one knee)

Sire, I have bidden the Spirits as you willed,

By vale and hill, East, West, and South and North
Through all the wood I sent your message forth.
There is no spot to which I did not go
Save to the swamp, where only foul things grow.

THE KING

Well done, my herald. Maidens, light the fire
Upon the altar. (*Maidens obey*) Like a thin blue spire
Let incense rise. (*To musicians*) And sweet as pipes
of Pan

Let music summon forth the Friends of Man—
The Spirits of the Trees, who lend us shade—
The Spirits of the Trees who grant us fire—
The Spirits of the Trees, who bring us rain.
They are the steadfast guardians of the birds,
Of timid thrush and raptured Philomel:
Their arms stretch out to hold the robin's nest.
Who wantonly destroys these Friends of Man,
Marring their beauty for the sake of gain,
Stripping the hills to fill his gaping purse,
He should be branded *felon*. (*To the musicians*) To
the tune

Of wild, sweet notes be said the summoning rune!

[*Music plays. Maidens at shrine speak the in-
vocation. The incense ascends, and the
Maidens wave above it staves decked with
leaves and flowers.*

FIRST MAIDEN

Oak and Maple, Larch and Pine,

Poplar, with your leaves a-shine,
Sweet Ailanthus, Tree of Heaven,
Locust Tree, to whom is given
Blooms that lure the honey-bee—
Tree Spirits, we summon ye.

SECOND MAIDEN

Chestnut, with your candled spires,
Ash, with berries red as fires
Gleaming through the Autumn mist,
Beech, and Elm, and Aspen, list!
Willow, Birch, and Alder Tree,
Friends of Man, we summon ye!

FIRST MAIDEN

By the hush of dawns and eves,
By the laughter of the leaves,
By the rapture of the rain,
By Spring's touch, half-joy, half-pain.
By all forest mystery
Tree Spirits, we summon ye!

*[The Tree Spirits, in robes of forest green,
begin to appear. All their movements are
light and magical. Their hair is unbound,
and floats, dryad-like, about their shoulders.
Each one has some symbol that distinguishes
her from the others. The Spirit of the
Willow has a robe like long green ribbons:
The Spirit of the Larch is brave in tassels:*

The Spirit of the Pine has crown and girdle of cones: the Ash has a girdle and necklace of scarlet berries, etc., etc. They dance out of the wood, and around the shrine, and one or another pauses in fleet salutation before the King and Queen. The music ceases. The Spirits of the Trees stand at right and left of the shrine, in a wide semicircle.

THE KING

Spirits, we bid you welcome, one and all.
Through these deep woods we bade our herald call
Larch, Willow, Maple, all whom we could name,
And now we thank you that you hither came
Unto this christening. For this truth we hold
That faëry favor is more prized than gold.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

(approaching cradle)

True to our ancient custom now we bring
Our gifts to this small daughter of a King.
I am the Spirit of the fragrant Pine,
Gift of long life to you, sweet babe, is mine.

[The Spirit of the Pine withdraws.]

THE SPIRIT OF THE LARCH

(stepping forward)

And I, the tasseled Larch bring talents rare:
No voice shall with your golden voice compare.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Your step shall be as light as thistledown,
Your twinkling feet like stars beneath your gown.

[*The Spirit of the Larch withdraws.*]

THE SPIRIT OF THE EVERGREEN

(*approaching cradle*)

I, Spirit of the Evergreen to you
Give constancy, a heart forever true.

[*The Spirit of the Evergreen withdraws.*]

THE SPIRIT OF THE AILANTHUS

(*approaching cradle*)

Ailanthus, I, oft-called The Tree of Heaven.
This branch I leave, this gift to you be given.
That through your eyes your soul shall shine as white
As the pure glow of altars, all a-light.

[*The Spirit of the Ailanthus withdraws.*]

THE SPIRIT OF THE ELM

(*approaching cradle*)

And I, The Spirit of the Elm bestow
Wisdom. In all fair knowledge live and grow.

[*The Spirit of the Elm withdraws.*]

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

I am the Spirit of the Maple Tree.
My gift is beauty. The Princess shall be
As radiant and as lovely as the moon.

[*While the Spirit of the Maple speaks a*

gnarled, dark-robed figure has approached in background. It is Swamp Oak, malign and twisted.

SWAMP OAK

(with jeering laughter)

A Moon Princess!

THE KING

(startled)

What's this?

SWAMP OAK

(coming forward)

A witch's rune!

[Consternation.]

My name is Swamp Oak, and a witch am I.
You asked the Spirits, but you passed me by.
I come unbidden.

THE QUEEN

(hastily)

But we would have sent

Had we but known——

SWAMP OAK

Think you I will relent,
Or that your lame excuses serve with me?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

No, I will have revenge. The child shall be
Moon-witched! Moon-ruled——!

[The Queen stretches out her arms imploringly.

Lady, you plead in vain!

The Princess with the moon shall wax and wane,
Young in the moon's full glow, but when 'tis spent,
A withered creature, haggard, wrinkled, bent.

[With staff upraised over cradle.

Be young when the moon's bright, and then be old
When the moon fades, and like the moon, a-cold!

THE SPIRIT OF THE SILVER BIRCH

(impetuously)

Have you done, witch?

SWAMP OAK

(glowering)

Nay, Spirit.

THE SPIRIT OF THE SILVER BIRCH

Pause and hear

The gift I bring. If a Prince shall appear
And woo the Princess spite of your decree:
Then shall your evil-witch spell ended be.
And at the Prince's kiss your power shall break,
The Princess be released for true love's sake!

SWAMP OAK

Your manners, Silver Birch, are most abrupt.
It is not always wise to interrupt

A witch when she is speaking. Now my spell
Has triple power!

THE QUEEN
(*imploring*)
Mercy!

SWAMP OAK
I do foretell

A darker gift.

THE QUEEN
Pity!

SWAMP OAK
No words shall stay
My purpose, nor the strength of it allay.
*[She looks about at the anxious court with evil
satisfaction.]*

THE KING
Keep us not in suspense. Make your words clear.

SWAMP OAK
Look to your Princess. You have need to fear.
Unless a Prince shall kiss her while she's old
The subtle portent of my charm shall hold.
And who will love her when her beauty's fled?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE QUEEN

(anguished)

Oh, Spirit of the Tree of Heaven, you said
Her soul should be a white and shining light——

SWAMP OAK

But who shall guess that through my portent's blight?
'Tis not the soul that's loved. 'Tis the soul's mask.

[Again the Queen mutely petitions.]

Plead not with me. 'Tis all in vain you ask.

THE SPIRIT OF THE WILLOW

But there are some who deeply see, and true.
One such shall all your hateful work undo.
Therefore I bid you hope, and as my gift I give
Faith: that your burdened hearts may lift and live
To see a happy ending to this day.

*[Those present lift their heads with a touch
of hope in their aspect. This Swamp Oak
sees. Again she stands above cradle.]*

SWAMP OAK

Hail, Moon Princess that shall the moon obey!
Alternate young and old, I hold you thrall!

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

The christening ends. Spirits, the deep woods call!

[Exeunt to music that is triste, the Tree Spirits]

to right and the Court to left, all joyousness departed. Swamp Oak crosses to right, down stage, and stands there, staff upraised, watching the others exit. When they have disappeared, exit Swamp Oak.

ACT II

The same. Eighteen years later. Enter from left the Princess, slender, beautiful, followed by her attendant, whose hair is lightly touched with gray. Behind her the lords and ladies of the court. The Princess is by turns gay, and sad: whimsical and sparkling, as changeable as the moon. The lords and ladies stay in background, at shrine. The Princess comes down to the fallen tree trunk in foreground. With her her attendant lady-in-waiting. The Princess wears a bunch of roses fastened against the rich brocade of her gown. She carries a sweeping fan of peacock feathers.

LADY-IN-WAITING

Sweet Princess, be not pensive.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Did I sigh?

LADY-IN-WAITING

Lady, to-night the moon shines round and high,
A silver glory, flooding wood and dell.
And you, dear Princess, by its magic spell
Are radiant, too, and young.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

31

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(half bitterly)

Aye, of a truth,

I too can claim the alchemy of youth
For a brief space. I count like miser's gold
Each fleeting moment. Look! This rose I hold,
If it doth fade, is it not still a rose?

LADY-IN-WAITING

A truth, Madame, that e'en a small child knows!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Oh, children see the world with other eyes
Than we, who have grown blind, and stupid-wise.

*[Crushes rose in her hand. Then opens her
hand again.]*

Beneath these bruised leaves the rose's heart
Lies all unchanged. Yet, who shall have the art
To guess at it? 'Tis a strange world, parde!

LADY-IN-WAITING

Princess, as I do love you faithfully,
I pray you banish all such thoughts as these.
What said the sweet, fair Spirits of the Trees?
Have you forgot their ancient prophecy?
The witch's power shall some day ended be.
The spell that binds you to an end be brought
Through one who by his heart alone is taught.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Through one who by his heart alone is taught. . (c) (e)

Oh, goodwife, tell me, is there such a one

To be found anywhere beneath the sun?

No. No. I spoke in jest. See, I am gay!

Come, shall we have a dance or roundelay?

(sings)

Wind-blown locks of youth,

Or gray and withered tresses:

Princes come and princes go,

But not one guesses!

But not one guesses! (With an attempt at gaiety)

All such thoughts beshrew!

(To Lords and Ladies)

Weave me a dance, with quaint steps, strange and new!

[They begin a dance, courtly and full of grace.

*The Princess watches them from her place
at right.*

My heart and I will watch, while not one guesses!

[As the dance is going on enter from the right

Prince Ulric, and from the left Prince Ala-

dore. Prince Ulric is handsomely garbed:

Prince Aladore wears a tattered cloak. In

his tattered cap is fastened an eagle's feather.

*They approach the Princess as the dance
ends.*

PRINCE ULRIC

Lady, I seek my hawk, that's slipped her jesses.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

33

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(shielding her face with her fan)

No hawk is here.

PRINCE ALADORE

And I—I come to find

'A Princess fair, whose name, blown on the wind
Makes sweet the very air.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(sweeping down her fan)

Those who hunt, find.

PRINCE ULRIC

Fair lady, do not thus in riddles speak.

I, too, would find the Princess.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

You must seek

If you would find her.

PRINCE ALADORE

Ah, her very name

Swings in my heart as doth an oriflamme

Before the eyes of some rapt worshiper.

For I have crossed the world in search of her,

And shall die happy, having seen her face.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Her name?

PRINCE ALADORE

The Forest Princess. Of your grace
Tell me where I may watch her passing by.

[Princess is visibly agitated, yet controls herself.]

PRINCE ULRIC

(insolently)

Nay, peasant lad, you cannot hope to try
For you are meanly dressed and meanly born.
The fair Princess would laugh your rags to scorn.

PRINCE ALADORE

Oh, all I ask is that she let me serve
Her truly, always. I would never swerve
From deathless fealty.

PRINCE ULRIC

Is the Princess fair?
What is the color of her eyes? Her hair—
Is it of golden or ebon hue?

PRINCE ALADORE

(Softly: his dreaming eyes on the Princess)
Dreaming, I wished that she might look like—you.

PRINCE ULRIC

Sweet lady, will you stand such insolence
From one who hath not even enough pence
To buy him a whole cloak! Tell me, I pray,
Where I may go to seek without delay
This fabled Princess.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Softly, gentle sir.

You may not go to her
Till questions have been asked and answered.
As swift as may be shall the task be sped.

[Turns to the court.]

Lordings and ladies, draw you near,
There is a matter shall appear
Whereof I am the judge. These pilgrims seek
The Forest Princess. Therefore shall each one speak
And tell us whence and where and why he came.
His lineage, his country, and his name.
Ere they be listed suitors for her hand.

*[Princess seats herself on marble seat, center,
with the lords and ladies grouped on each
side of her, Prince Aladore at left, Prince
Ulric at right.]*

Proceed. *(To Ulric)* You first, sir.

PRINCE ULRIC

Lady fair, my land
Is Algavain. A Prince of wind and wave

Am I, named Ulric, and surnamed "The Brave."
 Castles I own, crowned with a hundred towers,
 'And foam-swept gardens full of strange bright flowers.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(Sweetly bending her eyes on Aladore)

'And you?

[General consternation and protest.]

A LORD

Sweet lady!

PRINCE ULRIC

Madam!

LADY-IN-WAITING

E'en in jest

You must not! Think! A beggar!

A LORD

He is dressed

In rags!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(still sweetly)

I see.

And shall we measure, then, our courtesy
 By what folks wear?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

37

LADY-IN-WAITING

(in protest)

Sweet madam!

A LORD

(in protest)

Lady fair!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(with command)

Let be.

[Looks at Aladore.]

PRINCE ALADORE

A pilgrim from the land of Far-a-way
Am I.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

And have you tower-crowned castles?

PRINCE ALADORE

Yea.

Some in my land, and many a one in Spain,
And galleons that sail upon the main.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

What are their cargoes?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

PRINCE ALADORE

Hopes, desires, and dreams
From all the hearts of all the world.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Meseems

That is strange merchandise

LADY-IN-WAITING

Sweet madam—— Ah, be wise
In time. Dismiss this beggar.

A LORD

Yea,

Have naught to do with him.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Why, till this day
The lists were free

A LORD

But only Princes came——

LADY-IN-WAITING

And now this beggar without crown or name——

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Peace, gentle lordings. He shall be dismissed.
His name shall not be written on the list
Unless he answers questions I shall ask

With the right answer. That is a fair task.
Do you agree, my lords?

LORDS

We do agree.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(*to Prince Ulric*)

And you?

PRINCE ULRIC

I also.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(*to Aladore*)

And you?

PRINCE ALADORE

Joyfully.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(*her eyes on his*)

What is it hates the day and dreads the morrow?

PRINCE ALADORE

Lady, a hidden sorrow.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

And what is stronger than a witch's art?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

PRINCE ALADORE

Lady, a steadfast heart.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(wonderingly)

Where learned you this? A man in a tattered guise
Draws nearer to the heart of things, is wise
Beyond the jingling wisdom of the fools,
Or what the bearded sages teach in schools.

A LORD

But, lady, did he guess
The Answer rightly?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Of a surety, yes.
Write down: A pilgrim strange from Far-a-way
As suitor. Then depart.

[Princess rises. Lords and ladies move to background, and finally exeunt. The Lady-in-Waiting lingers, watching the Princess.]

PRINCE ULRIC

I pray you stay.

Most gracious judge, one moment. Do not go,
For I would more about the Princess know.
Is there no portrait traced on ivory's white
No painted likeness for our eyes' delight?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

41

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(proudly)

By an unpainted likeness judge and see.
I am the Princess!

PRINCE ALADORE

(with a caught breath)

Ah!

[He gazes at her, his soul in his eyes.]

PRINCE ULRIC

(with flamboyant worship)

Divinity!

Now can I speak my heart as I am fain!

[He falls on one knee, worshipfully.]

THE FOREST PRINCESS

You shall speak only when the moon doth wane.

PRINCE ULRIC

That's days away!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

(half whimsical, half sad)

Will not love last that long?

Or is it but a fragrance and a song,

A weft of moonshine? *(Seriously)* At this place and
hour

Meet me again. Till then—to each—a flower.

[She gives them each a rose.]

THE FOREST PRINCESS

The love that's pledged me when the moon is dark
Is all the love that I may have.

LADY-IN-WAITING

(*from background*)

Sweet——

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Hark!

My ladies call me. Keep your trysting well,
And I shall meet you without fail. Farewell.

[*Exeunt Princess and Court. Prince Aladore
gazes after her.*]

PRINCE ULRIC

I'll seek a lodging at a manor hall.

[*Exit Prince Ulric, left, up stage.*]

PRINCE ALADORE

(*as Prince Ulric goes*)

Inn o' the Stars is ever free for all!

[*Spreads his cloak on the ground.*]

So here I'll rest me. Sooth, the air blows sweet.

[*Seats himself on his cloak, takes out wallet.*]

Opens it, and brings forth a crust.

'And a crust spread with hunger is good meat!

'And dreams be wine enough!

[*Swamp Oak has stealthily approached from
right. She pauses behind him her staff up-
raised.*]

SWAMP OAK

Sleep deep!

PRINCE ALADORE

(drowsily)

I'll rest

And dream of her who long hath been my quest.

So fair the vision is . . .

SWAMP OAK

Sleep deep!

PRINCE ALADORE

So true [a] [a] [a]

SWAMP OAK

See but the visions I shall call for you!

[He sleeps profoundly.]

Moon wane! Moon bane!

All that he dreams be in vain, be in vain!

Let a magic sleep o'er his eyelids creep

Till his senses lie in confusion deep

His true love tryst he shall never keep.

Deep, sleep deep in this lonely wold,

For my witch's spell doth hold, doth hold!

*[For an instant she triumphs over him: then
withdraws into woods, right. He lies sleep-
ing where he has fallen.]*

ACT III

The same. Days later. Prince Aladore still sleeps. To soft woodland notes the Tree Spirits enter, and weave a dance in background. Gradually they come towards the foreground, and The Spirit of the Pine perceives Prince Aladore and calls to the other Spirits.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

Look where a mortal lies here, fast asleep!

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

About him withered leaves are drifted deep!

[They draw near, poised for flight if he should stir.]

THE SPIRIT OF THE WILLOW

'Across his eyes a spider's web is spun.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ELM

These leaves are Swamp Oak's! Now, by wind and
sun,
Some mischief is a-brew!

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

Look well! Look well!
What if the Witch fears he might break her spell?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

45

THE SPIRIT OF THE LARCH

Spirits, draw nearer. What if he should be
Predestinèd to set the Princess free?

THE SPIRIT OF THE EVERGREEN

Shall we not aid him, then, for her sweet sake?

THE SPIRIT OF THE ASH

Mortal! He does not stir! Awake! Awake!

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

Ah, 'tis a sleep no mortal power can break.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ELM

But we can break it. Soft! Bend low! Bend low!
Stoop down and touch his eyelids ere we go
With sprigs of spikenard and rose and rue,
And herbs that by the light of starshine grew!

[She bends over him, softly touching his eyelids.

Lilyroot and Goldenbell,

By your juices break this spell!

Let these the power of Swamp Oak's curse allay!

THE SPIRIT OF THE ASPEN

(trembling)

He wakes! He stirs! Spirits, away! Away!

[The Spirits draw away a little.

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

Oh, foolish Aspen! What is there to fear?

And we might be of service. Come, draw near.

*[Prince Aladore slowly wakens, sits up, looks
about him wonderingly.]*

PRINCE ALADORE

(dreamily)

Methought I was asleep and dreamed of her.

Then through the woods I heard a sweet wind stir

That called my name.

And like a pale green flame

The forest danced and glimmered in my sight.

[Brushes his hands across his eyes bewilderedly.]

'Twas but a dream. And yet, it is not night.

And who are these?

THE SPIRIT OF THE POPLAR

We be

The Spirits of the Trees.

PRINCE ALADORE

An it you please

Tell me, who am so sore bewildered

How long a time has sped

Since I first rested here?

Oh, I am stabbed with fear

That pierces, dagger-sharp. If I have missed

Through this strange slumber, my dear hope—my tryst!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

47

THE SPIRIT OF THE POPLAR

Courage, good mortal. Truly, since you slept
No lover's tryst hath in this wood been kept.
That I know well.

THE SPIRIT OF THE EVERGREEN

It was an evil spell
That lulled your rest.

PRINCE ALADORE

Then I am still in time?

THE SPIRIT OF THE ELM

To-night the moon is dark. The blue-bell's chime
Hath just struck three.

PRINCE ALADORE

Alas! A long, long hour
Ere she shall come. An hour! Infinity!

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

We shall do all that lies within our power
To make it speed full blithe and merrily,
Sweet—Prince.

PRINCE ALADORE

You call me Prince? How did you know?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

(lightly)

How does the wind guess when 'tis time to blow?

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

So long he's slept, all dabbled in the dew,
Hungry he must be.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ASPEN

(timidly)

Yea, and thirsty, too.

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

Spirits, be swift to serve him. Bring
Wild cherries. Plums.
And water from the spring!

*[The Spirits dance away to right and left on
their several errands, and soon emerge from
the woods again. The Spirits of the Maple,
and the Willow, and the Pine remain with
him.]*

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

(presenting a cup of leaves)

Maple leaf cup!

THE SPIRIT OF THE WILLOW

(giving him a piece of willow bark, rudely shaped):

A plate of willow ware!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

49

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

(presenting berries in a grass basket)

Some sparkle-berries!

THE SPIRIT OF THE EVERGREEN

Wine of vintage rare

Made from the purple mulberry.

*[The Spirit of the Evergreen and of the Maple
pour water and wine for him into his maple
cup. Their vessels are pitcher plants.]*

THE SPIRIT OF THE SILVER BIRCH

Honey! The golden gift of the wild bee!

THE SPIRIT OF THE POPLAR

Now for his raiment—Spirit of the Pine,

Lend me your needles! (*Stoops*) Gossamer, so fine

Your thread is that I'll borrow it!

*[Takes Prince Aladore's girdle and wallet and
sews with charming industry.]*

THE SPIRIT OF THE LARCH

(fixing his cap)

My longest tassel on your cap shall fit.

THE SPIRIT OF THE ASH

(throwing necklace of berries about his neck)

These rubies of the forest for your wear!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE SPIRIT OF THE SILVER BIRCH

(aside to the Spirit of the Pine)

Could we but warn him!

THE SPIRIT OF THE PINE

Silver Birch, beware!

Tamper not with black magic, lest there be
More ruth in store and deeper misery.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAPLE

Spirits, a stranger comes! We may not stay!

[Prince Ulric appears at left, down stage. The Tree Spirits dance from the scene, towards right background, and exeunt. As they go, enter from left, up stage, a gray, bent figure, with gray hair showing faintly beneath her hooded cloak. The hood hides her face. She leans heavily upon a staff, and walks with difficulty.]

PRINCE ALADORE

What poor old tottering woman wends this way?

[He goes to her.]

How faint! How spent she is. *(Calls to Ulric)* Oh,
Prince, be swift!

Kindle a fire of those dead leaves that drift
Across our pathway while I warm her hands.

[Aladore comes down center, the old woman leaning on him, as he chafes her hands.]

THE FOREST PRINCESS

51

PRINCE ULRIC

(haughtily)

Think you I'll mind a peasant lad's commands?

Tend if you will on age and helplessness;

But as for me—I seek the proud Princess.

[He exits, left, up stage.]

PRINCE ALADORE

(looking after him)

The proud Princess . . . ! He speeds upon the quest

While I—— *(Looks down on his burden)* How
breathlessly she seems to rest!

So piteous and weak, so worn and old.

Alack! Her lips and hands grow still more cold!

Fainter and fainter grows her pulse 'gainst mine.

Would that my lips might lend some warmth to thine,

Poor withered dame . . . ! *(He kisses her.)*

*[The Forest Princess stirs in his arms, her cloak
falls back and she slowly raises her head,
beautiful and young.]*

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Your kiss hath broken the spell!

It was your coming that they did foretell!

Yours!

PRINCE ALADORE

But, sweet Princess, only rags I wear!

You cannot love a beggar!

THE FOREST PRINCESS

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Yea, I swear
Through this disguise your princely soul I see
That in my utmost need didst stoop to me.

PRINCE ALADORE

(*rapturously*)

Now for such love as this may heaven be blessed!
Dear heart, I am a Prince. I spoke in jest.
Sun, wind, and rain have wrought me this disguise.
Far to the south my waiting kingdom lies.
And will you go with me, so far, so far?

THE FOREST PRINCESS

Oh, I will follow to the furthest star!
You, who are of my soul the deepest part.
I have no country but your steadfast heart.

[*As the Prince kissed the Princess The Spirit of the Tree of Heaven stole in, swiftly summoned the other Tree Spirits, and sent some of them flying to summon the Court. With the Princess's last words they enter. The Tree Spirits dance joyfully about them, then all exeunt to strains of music. Swamp Oak appears for an instant down stage, right. Then with gestures of dismay and fear she vanishes. The stage is left empty and the Masque ends.*]

THE GIFT OF TIME

(A Christmas Masque)

CHARACTERS

TIME

THE PAST

THE PRESENT

THE FUTURE

THE HOURS

FATHER CHRISTMAS

MORTAL

THE OLD YEAR

JANUARY

FEBRUARY

MARCH

APRIL

MAY

JUNE

JULY

AUGUST

SEPTEMBER

OCTOBER

NOVEMBER

DECEMBER

THE NEW YEAR

THE GIFT OF TIME

PLACE: *The Palace of Time.*

TIME: *An unmeasured space of time between the ending of Christmas and the coming of the New Year.*

The background and sides of the stage are hung with dark-green curtains, the green that is the color of holly leaves or pine. When these are parted for an entrance or exit deep-blue curtains flecked with silver stars are visible—as if Time's palace gave on the midnight sky.

In center background a throne-chair draped in dark green. Behind it, with its branches touching the chair, a pine tree, like the ash tree Ygdrasil, whose roots go down to the center of the earth.

At the rise of the curtain Time is seated on his throne. He wears a white beard, and traditional white locks, a gold crown, a white, flowing robe, purple mantle. Resting on one arm of his throne-chair is an hour-glass.

At left, on a dais, sit the Past, the Present, the Future. The dais is dark green, with two steps leading up to it. It is topped with a low green seat. On this sits the Present, clad in gold, with unveiled face. She looks frankly before her. At her right, facing background, sits the Past, in gray robes, her face half hidden. It is turned away from the audience. The Future, in rosy robes, covered with gray—the gray of

the mists that hide the future, and the rosiness of the hopes it contains. Her face is covered with a veil, and it is turned toward the audience. The veil is very delicate, so that her features are almost seen, but not quite. They look like figures from a Grecian frieze, the three fates who control the world.

Father Time lifts and reverses his hour-glass. Instantly from right come the Hours, the hours of day in sunlit yellow, the hours of night in deep blue, with touches of purple, and glints of silver stars. All kneel, addressing Time.

THE HOURS

Time, we obey thy glass,
We fleet-foot hours who pass
As swift as thought!
Our greeting here is brought!

[The Daylight Hours stand at each side of Time's throne, while their leader, with obeisance, addresses him.

A DAYLIGHT HOUR

We are the hours of sun,
And shod with gold we run
Our pathway bright.

[The Night Hours divide into two groups, standing at each side of Time's throne, and their leader approaches him with obeisance, and says:

A STARRY HOUR

The star-hours we,
Mystic, and free.

We wear the constellations for a crown of light.

[Time raises his hand. Hidden music sounds.]

A STARRY HOUR

(rapturously)

To music of the spheres!

Thus dance we through the years!

[They whirl into a dance, the stars on their robes glinting as they move. They beckon the Daylight Hours, and all weave together a measure of delight. As dance ends a chime of bells rings off stage. For a moment the Hours stand poised for flight, and then they exeunt, weavingly, a Daylight Hour and a Night Hour parting the curtains so that the other hours may pass through.]

Just as the last Hour vanishes Father Christmas enters from right background. He wears a medieval dress, a deep-crimson robe with pointed sleeves, red pointed shoes, and a crown of holly on his hair. His deep-crimson robe is edged with white fur. The sleeves are also edged with it. He has a white beard, rather short, and white locks, shorter than those of Time. In his hand he carries a white staff, wound with evergreen.

TIME

Hail, Father Christmas, with thy robe as red
'As holly berries. Hath thy day been sped
'With mirth and cheer?

FATHER CHRISTMAS

I went from door to door,
'And everywhere mankind cried "More!" "Give
more!"
'Till I was fain to turn on them and say:
"Ye make my feast a common market-day!"

TIME

(*musings*)

Mortals, I know are foolish: e'en the best.
Could we but teach one he might teach the rest.
Their eyes are greed-blind and they cannot see
All that is hung on the world's Christmas tree.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Yea, and they cry, "Give to us equally."

TIME

Not seeing my one great equal gift to all.

FATHER CHRISTMAS

(*indignantly*)

Why, they do clutch my robe—would hold me thrall
'As if I were a jester or a mime——

A VOICE WITHOUT

Open!

[There is a tremendous knocking without.]

TIME

Who clamors at the gates of Time?

FATHER CHRISTMAS

(Parting the curtains and looking out right)]

'A youth who all day long hath followed me

With talk of Christmas inequality.

And endless questions. He hath lost his way

Amongst the fleet-foot hours.

TIME

Then bid him stay,

Here where time is unmeasured. He may learn

Somewhat and teach his fellow-men in turn.

*[Time raises his hour glass and at its silent
signal The Old Year enters from right.]*

Old Year, a mortal clamors. Bid him in.

*[Exit the Old Year right. He quickly re-
enters followed by a Young Mortal with
the aspect of a blithe Greek god. The Mor-
tal looks about him with interest.]*

MORTAL

'Tis to a palace that I entrance win!

TIME

My palace.

THE GIFT OF TIME

MORTAL

(unabashed)

Lord, who art thou?

TIME

I am Time.

[Mortal turns and sees Father Christmas.]

MORTAL

'And thou, by holly and by sparkling rime,
'Art Father Christmas!

FATHER CHRISTMAS

Yea.

MORTAL

(to Present)

And thou?

TIME

Behold

The Past, the veiled Future, and in gold,
The shining Present.

MORTAL

(to the Old Year)

Thou who standest here
With melancholy eyes——

THE GIFT OF TIME

61

THE OLD YEAR

I am the Year

Who soon must pass to join the company
Of former years.

TIME

Mortal, a word with thee:

I hear thy world is rife with discontent,
And all the merry Christmas season spent
In sighing over inequality
Of gifts and giving. I would show to thee
Much unto which thy greed-bound eyes are blind.
Look well and hearken. Then go tell mankind
What thou hast fathomed. Christmastide should bring
Joy. And to give should be a joyful thing.
But to be ever looking for return—
It is as if ye lifted up an urn
Filled with the leaves of roses, and then found
Not roses, but a slimy serpent wound
In coil on coil.

MORTAL

But inequality
Of Christmas—Is it just that some have less
And others more?

TIME

Mortal, through joy and stress,
Sunshine and shadow, on the Christmas tree

Of all the world one gift hangs equally
For rich and poor. . . .

MORTAL

(*puzzled*)

One gift?

TIME

Yea, and it wears

A thousand lovely colors, and it bears
Supernal beauty: yet before no shrine
Are laid thank-offerings for this gift of mine
That power can never break, nor money buy—
A gift that is accepted heedlessly,
Yet is more precious than the wealth of Ind,
And given equally to all mankind
In equal portions.

MORTAL

(*still bewildered*)

And can it be spent?

TIME

Yea, Mortal, but it never can be lent.
Great joy it bringeth when invested well.

MORTAL

I cannot guess thy riddle.

TIME

I will tell

Thee plainer. On the world's great Christmas tree

The Gift of Time is hung perpetually—

A year. Twelve radiant months, and free to all:

Potent: and filled with wonders great and small.

Unpurchasable, beautiful, and free.

Hearken a while and let them speak to ye,

They whom ye watch with too accustomed eye.

Old Year, unto the Months my summons cry.

*[Time raises his hour-glass. The Old Year
blows a summons on a silver trumpet.
Music plays softly off stage. The Months
begin to appear from right, crossing stage,
saluting Time, and then taking up their
position in background. All wear sym-
bolic robes of varying colors.]*

JANUARY

I, January, bring fresh hope to bless

Mankind. The New Year bright with promises.

FEBRUARY

I, February, blue and gray days bring,

And at farewell a promise of the Spring.

MARCH

I am bird-bringing March. With jocund wind

I pipe the first flowers up to meet mankind!

*[In pantomime plays a note or two on Pan's
pipes.]*

APRIL

And I am callèd April and I bring
The immemorial scents and sounds of Spring;
Pale, tender twilights, and the silver rain;
A rapture half of joy and half of pain.

MAY

And I am May, the month of blossoming bough.

JUNE

And I am June, the honey month, whose brow
Is bound with roses, and whose days are sweet
With all that thrush and lark and bee repeat.

JULY

And I, July, do harvest-promise bring.

AUGUST

Golden the August fields of garnering.

SEPTEMBER

September, month of magic moons, am I.

OCTOBER

And I, October, come with panoply
Of purple and of scarlet and of gold.

NOVEMBER

November, sober clad am I. I hold
Sway over hushèd fields and wind-swept trees.

THE GIFT OF TIME

65

DECEMBER

Snowflakes as star-shaped as the Pleiades
I bring, who am December. And I send
The Old Year forth to join the years that wend
Along the highway of the Past. I hold
Fulfilled hopes: and faiths that have been sold:
And broken promises: forsaken dreams:
The piteous wrack of failure: and the gleams
Of purpose held through all adversity.
And since I am the last, at seeing me
In all men's hearts there rings a questioning chime:
"What hast thou done with the great Gift of Time?"
Twelve radiant ministers to thee were sent:
How hast thou used the bounty that they lent?
And lesser servitors—the days and hours,
Who gladly lent their service to thy powers.

TIME

(gravely, yet kindly)

Ye talk of Christmas inequality,
Yet hung upon the whole world's Christmas tree
A gift mankind receives all heedlessly,
And without thanks——

MORTAL

Forgive our twilight sight!

We mortals need a vision blinding white
As lightning's flash to know the potency
Of common things. Thy great gift now I see

As for the first time. I will humbly tell
This mystery to mankind.

THE OLD YEAR

Soon will my knell
Ring. Ere it striketh let me see the face
Of the strong youth who comes to fill my place.

TIME

Future, thy task!

[Future sounds a summoning note on a silver trumpet. The Old Year withdraws toward right, looking eagerly toward left, his robe half drawn across his face. The New Year, radiant and young, appears at left.]

THE NEW YEAR

I answer thy command!
New life, new hope, new promise in my hand.
A host of blithe to-morrows follow me,
The months, that are man's servitors to be,
August, supernal, follow in my train.
I wait the chime that shall announce my reign.

[He stands, waiting. The chime of midnight begins to strike. The Old Year covers his face, and exits, right, the months following, in a lovely group. As they exeunt, the New Year still stands with face uplifted.]

MORTAL

Oh, Father Time, thanks that I am less blind
To the great gift that thou hast given mankind!

*[As Mortal speaks he stands facing audience,
far forward, and the curtains that hide the
stage are drawn together behind him as the
chimes go on striking. At the note of
twelve the curtains part, and show an empty
stage.]*

Lo! They are gone! Yet it was not a dream!
Before my eyes I saw the New Year gleam.
And I have sworn Time's messenger to be.

[Turns, faces audience with arms outstretched.]

Therefore, oh, fellow mortals, hark to me!
Though Christmas gifts ye fashion great or small,
Mark how ye take the greatest gift of all.
And unto all who now are gathered here
I wish blithe Yuletide and a well-spent year.

CURTAIN

A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

CHARACTERS

LYSSA

ARMIDA

CHARIS

ZEPHYR

A DRYAD IN BLACK

A DRYAD IN GRAY

FIRST LITTLE DRYAD

SECOND LITTLE DRYAD

THIRD LITTLE DRYAD

FOURTH LITTLE DRYAD

FIFTH LITTLE DRYAD

SIXTH LITTLE DRYAD

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

FIRST RIVER GOD

SECOND RIVER GOD

A LITTLE RIVER GOD

THE RAINDROPS

CONSERVATION, THE NEW GODDESS

FREEMAN

HUSK

CALLUS

} Mortals.

Other Dryads, Little Dryads, Little Raindrops,
River Gods, Little River Gods.

A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

TIME: *The present.*

PLACE: *Any American woodland.*

SCENE: *A grassy sward, flanked by trees right, left, and background.*

In the center of the grassy stage background there is an altar rudely built of stone. It is very ancient and weatherworn. It is round, and stands about five feet high. It is approached with a few irregular stone steps leading up to it. In the center of the altar there is a parting of stone wide enough for any one to step through. This gap is hidden by feathery swinging vines. A vine-covered tree-trunk at left.

Enter Lyssa from right, in green and brown dryad dress.

LYSSA

Armida! Charis! Come! the bright
Sunshine calls. Dance, thistle-light!

[Armida and Charis run in from left.]

Dryads, sisters! Leave your trees.

Come and frolic with the breeze

That shall play us harmonies

Sweet as Orpheus ever made!

[They etch weavingly the first part of a dance.]

The little dryads enter and join the taller

72 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

*dryads. They also wear dryad robes, with
hair unbound.*

LITTLE DRYADS

May we dance, too, in this glade?

LYSSA

Yea!

Stay!

CHARIS

Little dryads, ye shall learn

How to weave and how to turn

Through the mazes of our dance

Fleet as any sunbeam's glance!

[They stand poised for dancing, thistle-light.]

LYSSA

Dryads, all! Attend! Attend!

By our woodland altar bend!

*[Other taller dryads come in from right and
left, joining Lyssa at altar.]*

Gentle Forest Goddess take

An offering for joy's own sake!

And we place here as our sheaves

Twinkling green and silver leaves.

*[Lyssa places leaves on the altar, raising them
first in worship. The other dryads kneel
before the altar prayerfully.]*

Great goddess, though it be a simple thing,

We pray you take an humble offering
From all
The trees both great and small.

CHARIS

(with renewed lightness)

Now, Armida, let us go
And weave a measure to and fro!
Oh, so sweet!
Oh, so fleet!
Hours were made for dancing feet!

[They dance joyously. Zephyr enters, a lithe, boyish figure in pale gray. He pipes gaily on a flute, with Pan-like lightness. Sudden and sharp, cutting like a knife across his music, comes the sound of a buzz-saw. Armida pauses, startled.]

ARMIDA

Hark! What's that? Is it the breeze?

CHARIS

It is but the hum of bees!

[It sounds again. This time closer and unmistakable.]

LYSSA

No! *It is the voice of death!*

[The dryads are terrified, all save the little dryads, who look on with wonder.]

74 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

Drawing near! "Kill! Kill!" it saith.
Soon great fangs will rend and tear
All our beauty.

ARMIDA

Will they spare

None of us?

LYSSA

Nay. Not one.
Death is here.
Our lives are done.
Unless——

ARMIDA

(*breathlessly*)

Unless——

LYSSA

Haply it be decreed
That this insatiate hunger, this foul greed
That strips our uplands and our woodlands bare
May not take all, but winnow here and there.

ARMIDA

'Ah, must we die?

[*Again the angry buzz tears across the summer
tranquillity.*]

CHARIS

That ravening thing will slake
Its lust with trees.

ARMIDA
(*cowering*)
Charis!

CHARIS
And it will make
This place a desert.

FIRST LITTLE DRYAD
(*as saw sounds again*)
Angry bees!
[*Zephyr has been at right, looking off stage.*
He calls in warning.

ZEYPHR
Dryads! Back into your trees!
Man approaches.

ARMIDA
Quick! Away!

LYSSA
Vanish all!

CHARIS
We dare not stay!
[*Zephyr and the dryads vanish from the scene.*
Enter, from right, three men. The first,
Freeman, is a rangey, well-built young fel-
low. He wears a dark linen shirt, open at

76 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

the neck. He has knickerbockers and leather boots, laced to the knee. Husk, who is fat and red-faced, wears a tan alpaca motor-coat. Callus is yellow-faced, dark, and thin.

FREEMAN *

This finishes our walk. With this last view
We have seen all the ground.

[They come down to fallen log, Husk mopping his brow with a handkerchief.]

HUSK

So! We can sign
At leisure, after we have had our lunch.
What stones are these?

FREEMAN

An altar, Mr. Husk.
That's stood here since time immemorial.
Even before the Indians came folks say.
'Tis called an altar to an unknown god.

HUSK

Don't take much stock in these antiques myself.
Suppose you do?

* Although these lines are written in verse they are to be spoken as the harshest prose, with the inflections of everyday speech.

FREEMAN

Well, Mr. Husk, you see,
My family had lived here many years.
Six generations, root and branch. And I—
I am the last. Often I used to play
Under these spreading trees and sail my boats
In all the little springs and pools that dot
This woodland like gems set in moss.

HUSK

You're wise

To sell. Land's apt to lose in value.
Eh, Callus? When it takes a lot to live,
You've got to get a lot! How's that for sense?
[Freeman looks off, apparently not hearing him.]

FREEMAN

My ancestors lived off the land.

HUSK

(jocose)

Well, Freeman,

That shows you have a longer head than they.
You take your pleasure as it comes.

FREEMAN

(smiling)

That's true.

And now this land is yours—or almost yours.
We've only got to sign the papers. Then——

78 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

HUSK

Those sentimental stones of yours will go
To patch a new stone wall, or mend a road.
Utility's my watchword every time.
While as for trees——

CALLUS

(drawling, as buzz-saw again sounds on the air)

Freeman, within a week
You'd never guess there'd been a woodland here.

VOICES OF THE DRYADS

(passing through the woodland like a moaning sigh)

Have mercy! Pity!

FREEMAN

(startled)

Did you hear that?

HUSK

What?

FREEMAN

Why, Husk . . . I swear . . . I thought I heard . . .
a voice.

HUSK

(with bills and gold in his hands counting)

Fistfuls of green and gold talking through cloth.

CALLUS

Money talks, Freeman. Eh?

HUSK

(nudges Freeman gaily)

It's too blamed hot

To stand here talking in the sun. Come on.

Sit down.

[They move over to a shady spot on the grass.

We have a whole half hour till lunch.

[Calculating.

Ten thousand feet of lumber and six saws. . . .

VOICES OF THE DRYADS

Alas! Alas! We are condemned to die!

FREEMAN

Some one is calling to us through the wood!

[He starts up and leaves the others intent and listening.

HUSK

Sun-struck, my friend. This heat is something fierce.

[Charis steals out of the wood a little way, and reaches out her hands in supplication to Freeman.

LYSSA

Charis, beware!

80 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

CHARIS

Nay, I will plead with him.
Oh, mortal, do not make this blithesome wood
A place of death and silence, blot us out
Forever from the rapture of the sun.
It took a hundred years of dawn and dew,
Of rain and starlight and of quickening earth,
To make this tapestry of living green.
And you would rend it in a single day!
Oh, do not let us perish utterly!

*[Indicating little dryads who peer timorously
from wood.]*

Let these, the youngest of us, stay to prove
That once this glade was beautiful.

VOICES OF THE DRYADS

(a mournful murmur)

Alas!

[Charis withdraws.]

FREEMAN

(gazing intently at the place where she stood)

I thought I heard—— Did you see something move
There, in the branches?

HUSK

You have stood too long
Out in the heat. Come on, man. Come to lunch.

FREEMAN

(*slowly*)

I'm not so sure I sha'n't come back again
To find out what it was that stirred and cried
There in that thicket. I hate mystery.

[*Exeunt Freeman, Husk, and Callus, left. The
dryads look out from their hiding-places.
Then they slowly enter.*]

LYSSA

Charis, alas! It was in vain!

ARMIDA

In vain!

LYSSA

They could not see us.

CHARIS

Nay, nor hear our cries.

LYSSA

'Twas all in vain!

[*Lyssa sinks down in an attitude of despair.
One of the little dryads who has been stand-
ing near the fallen tree-trunk stoops and
picks up a piece of gold.*]

CHARIS

We are condemned to die.

82 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

FIRST LITTLE DRYAD

(showing gold piece in her palm).

Lyssa, what is this?

LYSSA

(monotonously throughout).

'Tis money.

FIRST LITTLE DRYAD

It is colored just like honey.

LYSSA

'Tis for things like this we're sold.

SECOND LITTLE DRYAD

If we plant it, would it grow?

Lyssa, tell us?

LYSSA

No. No.

THIRD LITTLE DRYAD

Could it ever make a tree?

LYSSA

Never.

FOURTH LITTLE DRYAD

What good can it be?

Could it make a singing bird?

LYSSA

Nay.

FOURTH LITTLE DRYAD

And it hath never stirred.
Like a cold, dead thing it lies.

FIFTH LITTLE DRYAD

Could it paint the butterflies?
Or make the Spring come earlier?

SIXTH LITTLE DRYAD

Or teach the sweet sap when to stir?
Lyssa?

LYSSA

Ah, must we be sold
Just for chill, unblossoming gold?
(*with fervor*)
No! Upon the gods I call!
Pray to the Forest Goddess, one and all.
Hear now our cry,
Great Goddess,
And draw nigh.

[*The Dryads stand in supplicating attitudes.*]

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

(*her voice coming sweetly from background*)

Who is it calls me?

[*The Goddess of the Forest enters from background. She is tall and stately and wears*

84 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

*a green robe, her flowing hair is bound with
a green chaplet. She has an overrobe in
which a hundred dull, soft colors mingle,
the red of moss, the gray of lichen, the
brown of pine needles, the faint green of
new leaves, the deep green of the midsum-
mer forest.*

LYSSA

These,
The Dryads from the trees,
Condemned to die.
Oh, thou who fillest the burgeoning land with joy,
Whose smile is sunshine, and whose footsteps are
Embossed with flowers wherever thou hast trod,
Have mercy on us, counsel us and aid
Against the greed and tyranny of man.
It is not by the thousands that we pass
Into the dust
(For that were only just,
Since man must have his shelter and his fire),
But by the tens of millions we expire,
And some of us for utter needlessness.

ARMIDA

Oh, pity our distress!

DRYADS

(*murmuring*)

Alas! Alas!

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

But ye are not alone,
 Oh, dryads! From the forest's inmost heart,
 From the pied meadows and the silver streams
 A cry goes up against the greed of man
 Who wastes the living beauty of the earth
 As if he could, with one wave of his hand,
 Create another world. My nights, my days
 Reverberate with murmurs, tears, and cries
 Of the despoiled ones. Yet it is just,
 Oh, dryads, that I hear thy prayers alone,
 And not the others?

CHARIS

Quickly, Zephyr, bring
 The River Gods!

ZEPHYR

Faster than whirl of wing
 I fly!

[Exit Zephyr. Dryads enter from right. Some wear dark-brown veils over their hair, and walk haltingly as if wounded. Others have arms that appear gashed—from their elbows hang flying strips: some arms seem to end at the elbow. Others are clad in the gray and black of ashes. All of them move silently and wraithlike. One of the dryads in black bows before the altar.]

86 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

Who now draw nigh?

CHARIS

These are my sisters who do cry to thee.

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

(looking at the dryad in black)

Who art thou?

DRYAD IN BLACK

(with an effort to stand erect)

Goddess, I was once a tree.

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

And then?

DRYAD IN BLACK

And then,

Through the ignorance of men,

Wounded sore and left to die.

Wasted, wasted utterly.

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

And these?

A DRYAD IN GRAY

(hollowly)

The ghosts of trees—

Dryads with their beauty marred,

Twisted, broken, ashen, scarred.
 We clamor to you, Goddess, for redress
 Against man's carelessness
 That lets a restless spark
 Fly wide into the dark,
 Like a small seed of death.
 Then in an instant's breath
 Red vines flower up a tree
 And blossom blazingly,
 And spread till all the woodlands are
 A blur of ash and char.
 Goddess, to thee we cry against such fate.
 Help, ere it be too late.

*[From background come the River Gods in
 varying shades of blue. Those from the
 mountain torrents wear blue that is almost
 green, flecked with the white of foam. The
 little River Gods wear pale blue. The
 taller River Gods wear dark gray-blue.
 One or two of them are bound with chains.
 They all bear a faint resemblance to Nep-
 tune. All move slowly and languidly.]*

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

Gods of the River, ye who used to run
 Swift as blithe brooks a-glitter in the sun:
 Why come ye now so wearily and slow?

FIRST RIVER GOD

Because the springs of life in us are low.

88 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

SECOND RIVER GOD

We are the gods from snow-cold streams of mountains,
From wayside rills and wells and pure, deep fountains.
Not against man our cry:

We are forsaken

By the sweet silver children of the sky.

Our strength from us is taken,

Without their help and comfort we must die.

*[The Little Raindrops, tiny childish creatures,
enter and stand looking at the Goddess of
the Forest. They are clad in silver and
gray.]*

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

Speak, Silver Drops of Rain, why have ye left
Our brothers of the River thus bereft?

THE RAINDROPS

(speaking all together, patteringly)

When forests die,

From the sky

We no longer fall.

Brooks run dry,

Fountains die,

They perish, all!

ARMIDA

(passionately)

Goddess, we pray! What help is there for these,
The River Gods, the Dryads from the trees?

A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION 89

THE GODDESS OF THE FOREST

There is no help. I have no power to give
Ye peace or succor, or to help ye live.
Cry to some goddess who is yet unborn.

*[The Goddess of the Forest moves away from
the altar with slow, sorrowful step. Deep
dejection falls on all present.]*

LYSSA

(with despair)

The old gods die, and we are left forlorn.

CHARIS

(with emotion)

Oh, I have dreamed a goddess, fair as morn,
Whose touch is Healing, and whose smile is Peace.
Oft at the twilight hour, when comes surcease
From humankind, it seems as if a breath
Touched all the forest whispering, "Life!" not
"Death!"

I dreamed her touch, filled with divine compassion.
Oh, comrades, let us cry to her and fashion
Our broken prayer
Before this altar.
Let us not despair.

90 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

OMNES

(in supplication)

Oh, unknown Goddess, hear our cry to thee!

Oh, unknown Goddess, wake. And set us free!

[As if in answer to this forest litany, there rises slowly from the altar a beautiful, benign figure, who looks on them compassionately. It is Conservation.]

CHARIS

(awed)

Goddess!

CONSERVATION

I answer ye!

OMNES

(with a great breath of relief)

Ah! . . .

CONSERVATION

Quench your fears.

[Comes down from the altar.]

Quickened this moment by your bitter tears

And by your prayers, I stand.

FIRST RIVER GOD

And wilt thou free the land?

CONSERVATION

Only by man can Greed be vanquishèd,
And Ignorance to outer dark be sped.
My name is writ in gold
Upon this staff I hold.

*[A River God looks at staff, and speaks with
salutation.]*

RIVER GOD

Great Conservation, hail! New Goddess!

ARMIDA

(gazing at her, torn between hope and fear)
Oh,

If she should free us——!

CONSERVATION

Greed cannot be broken
Till by man's self the magic word is spoken
That sets ye free.
But, Dryads, trust to me.
And ye, oh, River Gods.

[Looking off left, finger on lip.]

Man comes again.

(General movement of withdrawal)

And he must learn to look on his domain
With new eyes. I will tutor him. So all
Withdraw and come again when I shall call.

*[The Dryads and River Gods slip away into
the woods; right, left, and background,*

92 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

where they can be dimly seen like figures in a tapestry. They stand awaiting the return of Freeman.

Freeman enters, starts to cross stage, and is met by Conservation, who comes slowly toward him. He suddenly sees her, stops, and their eyes meet. He is not quite sure whether she is a waking dream or a reality.

CONSERVATION

Mortal, must there be left no trace to tell
Of the old wood your fathers planted here?

FREEMAN

(brushing his hand across his eyes)

Impossible! It must be that I dream!

CONSERVATION

An ugly dream that bids you strip a wood
And leave no hostages, no growing life.
Young trees and old—you'd sweep them all away.
Yet you could make a law that would enforce
The safety of a forest: you could check
The ravages of Greed: force Greed to take
Only that which is needed—leave the rest,
A promise of the guerdon of the earth
For future years.

FREEMAN

(staring at Conservation)

A waking dream this is!

But . . . you . . . are . . . real. . . .

CONSERVATION

The forest wounds are real!

(Indicating Dryads and River Gods)

Look where they cry you pity!

(With staff upraised, commanding magical powers)

Let his eyes

Behold true vision! Look!

*[The Dryads move, mutely stretching out their
arms imploring pity.]*

FREEMAN

(amazed)

Why, now I see

Sorrowful faces!

Arms outstretched to me. . . .

*[The Dryads-in-Green, who have petitioned him,
move back and let the Dryads-in-Black with
their appalling dress come clearly into view.]*

Can these be trees?

CONSERVATION

These are the stricken ghosts

Of trees that *were*.

94 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

FREEMAN

(*shuddering*)

These charred and broken hosts!

CONSERVATION

Torn with iron teeth, or marred with careless fire,
Then left on hill and valley to expire
All needlessly: and with their dying bring
The curse of drought to every hill and spring
That laughed in their cool shade.
The River Gods
Whom Greed hath made
His sullied servitors; bound with his chain;
Or left, drought-racked, to die for lack of rain.
Oh, hear the prayer of these,
The brothers of the Trees!

*[At left and right, kneeling in supplicating
groups, the River Gods are dimly seen.]*

FREEMAN

(*To Conservation*)

It is for you, strange dream, to set them free.

CONSERVATION

I have no power save what you give to me.
This waste can end only at man's behest.
Oh, speak the word that ends it! Mortal, speak!

A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION 95

FREEMAN

How shall I know the word my tongue should say?

[*Enter Husk and Callus.*]

HUSK

Freeman, we've hunted all about for you.

FREEMAN

Hush! (*Looks at Dryads. Indicates*) Don't you see them? Look?

HUSK

(*staring at the Dryads but not seeing them*)

See what? See where?

(*Looks about bewilderedly*)

FREEMAN

There, where a Dryad reaches out her arms
Imploring pity.

HUSK

(*not minding Freeman, and speaking to Callus*)

It's the little trees

That you can't use that choke the work up most.

I'll see that a clear sweep is made of them.

We'll start on Monday morning.

(*Indicates Dryads*)

96 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

FREEMAN

(staying him)

Can't you hear?
Or can't you see? Man, use your eyes, and *look!*

HUSK

(staring about obligingly)

Not a blamed thing! *(He looks at Conservation but does not see her)*

CONSERVATION

Greed's eyes are always blind,
'And his ears deaf.

FREEMAN

(to Husk, indicating Conservation,

Can you not see her? Look!

HUSK

Her? Who? You're going looney!

FREEMAN

*You can't see
The reason why this wood should not be cut?*

HUSK

(staggered)

Not cut? What do you mean?

FREEMAN

(*doggedly*)

I will not sell

Unless you sign a contract that will bind
Your workers, so that they will leave a third
Of this wood standing. Name your price.

HUSK

(*gazing*)

A third. . . .

Leave a third standing . . . ! He is going cracked!

(*firmly*)

I've got to close this deal. Train leaves at four

FREEMAN

Mr. Husk——

HUSK

(*shortly*)

Yes.

FREEMAN

Truth is, if you could see

What I have seen 'twould make it easier

Talking. . . .

HUSK

(*losing patience*)

If I could see . . . ! What-d'ye-mean see?

(*with growing anger*)

You bring me here and waste my time and then

98 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

Cook up a tale of sparing trees. Well, sir,
I like your nerve! I'm damned if I will spare
A single one. I——

*[Callus touches his arm gently. Husk stops
with a snort. Changes his tone.]*

Now, look here, Freeman,
If you want more it's easy to speak out
Instead of stringing up a yarn like this.

FREEMAN

(evenly)

Either the land is cleared as I have said,
Or I won't sell. That is my answer.

HUSK

Lord!

To waste a day dealing with crazy folk!
Come, Callus.

CALLUS

(dryly)

Had enough?

HUSK

(shaking his fist at Freeman)

You'll get a name
For breaking bargain that will stink from here
To the next township!

[Exeunt Husk and Callus, left.]

FREEMAN

(*to himself*)

I don't think I care,

As long as *these* are free!

[*He looks at the Dryads and River Gods.*]

CONSERVATION

(*with deep delight*)

He speaks the word that gives me power! Advance,
Oh, trees! Oh, River Gods!

[*The Dryads and River Gods come forward,
the stricken ones with lighter steps and more
joy in their aspect.*]

FIRST RIVER GOD

My pulses dance

With life renewed!

CHARIS

Quick, Zephyr, bring
Your jocund pipe, with notes as blithe as Spring!

CONSERVATION

(*to Freeman*)

Lo, salve of education on your eyes
Will make you see the world in a new guise.

[*She touches his eyes lightly with the tips of her
white fingers.*]

100 A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION

And in your hand I pray you hold for me
This staff of New Responsibility.

(Conservation gives Freeman her staff)

FREEMAN

But it is heavy!

CONSERVATION

Yea, all great things are!

*[Twilight is imminent. Long shadows steal
across the grass. Homing birds begin their
evening matins.]*

The wind blows sweet! And soon the evening star
Will look down on the joy that you have made.
Ah, if each sparkling spring and wooded glade
Were ruled with wisdom, their true wealth would be
This nation's greatest, deepest treasury.
Oh, Mortal, go forth from this wood and teach
Your fellow-men through word magic, that each
May learn that beauty's worth is more than gold,
For gold is only dross when beauty's sold
Irrevocably.

*[Steps forward and addresses the Dryads, River
Gods, and Little Raindrops.]*

You whom Greed held thrall,
Dryads, and River Gods, I bid you all
Who make this world a wonder and delight,
Be healed of your scars! Dance light! Dance light!
*[ZEPHYR blows a strain of music on his pipe.
Those Dryads who wore charred and ghastly*

A MASQUE OF CONSERVATION 101

raiment fling it off and show the vernal green dress that they wear at Conservation's touch. The Little Raindrops weave in and out amongst the River Gods, who now step swiftly and freely. The dance ebbs toward left, but some of the Dryads slip back to their trees at right and background. The River Gods slowly disappear left, with the Raindrops. Last of all Conservation pauses a moment, left, with arms upraised. The Goddess of the Forest steals away and vanishes, background. Still Conservation stands. Then with the last notes of Zephyr's pipe, she too is lost to view. The shades of twilight creep closer.

FREEMAN

(rousing himself as if from a spell, his voice still tranced with it)

Did I but dream?

(He looks about him. There is no motion in the glade, and no sound save the twitter of drowsy birds)

Twilight falls softly blue.

(He steps toward the audience)

If I have dreamed—

(He looks at the audience and speaks directly to them)

Oh, make the dream come true!

THE MASQUE ENDS

THE MASQUE OF POMONA

CHARACTERS

POMONA

VERTUMNUS

CAMILLA

Maidens. Shepherds. Vine-dressers. Children.

THE MASQUE OF POMONA

A glade with trees right, left, and background. In the center background an altar of gray, weather-beaten stone. Ferns and vines show greenly through the chinks of stone: lichens nestle against it. At right, down stage, a white Roman bench.

The Masque begins with the entrance of a group of maidens and children, carrying garlands in their hands. They walk in from right, make obeisance before the altar, and then stand in groups, one group at each side of the altar the while they sing. While they are singing the first verse of their hymn of praise, shepherds enter, brown-clad figures, bearing white fleece as their offering. Following the shepherds come the growers of grapes and olives, with ceremonial goblets filled with oil and wine. Behind these follow yet others, the owners of orchards with their offerings.

CHORUS

(omnes singing)

Orchard Goddess, here we bring
Snow-white wool as offering
From Cyprus and Ione.
Pour we now the oil and wine,
Purple splendor of the vine.
Hail to thee, Pomona!

Thou by sylvan gods held dear,
Who art worshiped far and near,
From Ostia to Dodona.
Smile on vineyard and on field,
And the fruit our orchards yield.
Hear our prayer, Pomona.

*[The gifts * are, one by one, laid reverently on
the altar. The maidens approach and lay
their garlands on it.]*

Thou who of love wilt have none,
Yet who lookest kindly on
Strephon and Corona.
For the blessing of thy glance
Weave we now a harvest dance,
Oh, adored Pomona!

*[The maidens dance before the altar, strewing
petals. Then the rustics dance a gay, un-
couth measure. Then, with one of their
number blowing on an oaten pipe, they
march in a small procession from the field.
Two onlookers have paused at shrine, a
youth in a cloak half gray, half green, worn*

* These dances and offerings will naturally partake of the season of the year in which the masque is produced. There were two festivals to Pomona, one in the Spring and one in the Autumn, that given in the Spring being the simplest. If the Masque is given in the Spring there will be apple blossoms and peach blossoms instead of the fruits, and vine leaves but no grapes. If the Masque is given in the Autumn there will be Autumn fruits to glow upon the altar.

THE MASQUE OF POMONA 107

over a gray-green tunic, and an old woman in black and russet. They do not join the procession that is leaving the orchard. The old woman is Camilla, the youth Vertumnus.

CAMILLA

(perceiving Vertumnus)

Vertumnus! Guardian of the Turning Year!
I give thee greeting! Lo! What dost thou here?

VERTUMNUS

(moodily)

Naught.

CAMILLA

Worshiped God, why dost thou stand apart
From all our joy?

VERTUMNUS

No joy is in my heart;
For all the turning seasons do not bring
Pomona's love, and that is the one thing
I crave beyond all other.

CAMILLA

If winds fail
A mariner, he doth but hoist more sail.

VERTUMNUS

I thank thee, mortal, for thy good intent,
And for the hope thy cheering words have lent
My troubled spirit.

CAMILLA

Doth she tell thee why
She will not love thee?

VERTUMNUS

Cold as is the sky
Ere the first flush of dawn—so cold is she,
And swears that she will like Diana be
And love no man, mortal or god. Alas!

CAMILLA

Fancies like these are oft-times known to pass.
Thou art a God, and I a mortal, old
And short of sight. Yet once I was not cold
When Spring came. And, Wood God, it yet may be
That from my store of years I'll counsel ye
With words that have the strength of garnered grain.
Banish despair, and plead thy cause again.

[Pomona appears in background.]

VERTUMNUS

Hither she comes.

[Camilla hobbles quickly to right, standing behind trees so that she is not observed. Po-

THE MASQUE OF POMONA 109

mona comes slowly to center, a radiant figure, blithe, exquisite.

Pomona, lo! 'Tis I!

Against thy cruel hardness do I cry!
Kind to the orchards, yet unkind to me.

POMONA

The orchards give their worship silently.

VERTUMNUS

Cold as the sea-spray from which Venus rose,
Listen. Across the land the sweet Spring * blows,
But my heart, empty of thy golden love,
Is desolate.

POMONA

Ye see the moon above,
A silver sickle that doth reap each star
At dawn's first warning. Vertumnus, as far
From love am I as is the moon from earth.

(She turns)

Farewell.

VERTUMNUS

Thou leavest me to endless dearth.
[*Exit Pomona. Camilla steps forward from behind her screen of leafage.*]

CAMILLA

Vertumnus!

For an Autumn Masque this line may read:

* Listen. Across the land the Autumn blows.

110 THE MASQUE OF POMONA

VERTUMNUS

Ah, good mortal, art thou there?

CAMILLA

Mortals be very practised in despair
Because their lives are filled with bitter tears.

VERTUMNUS

Thou sawest how it went?

CAMILLA

Cry down thy fears!
Never so cold but some brave bird will sing.
Wintry my locks, yet have I known the Spring.
And from that memory I counsel thee.
Be swift and take this ancient cloak from me.
And flax and wool will whiten all thy head.

VERTUMNUS

What meanest thou?

[Camilla takes flax and wool from altar, and places her cloak about the shoulders of Vertumnus. She lets white locks show under the hood of the cloak.]

CAMILLA

Thy hands be wrinklèd
(She takes ashes from stone on altar and marks his hands)

With ashen gray. Aye, and thy face as well!

(Marks crow's feet at the corners of his eyes.

Steps back to admire her handiwork)

Vertumnus! Who could look at thee and tell
Thou wast a God! So do time's ashes change
All that was lovely into something strange.

(Gives him her staff)

Now shalt thou say unto Pomona this:

"Oh, lovely Goddess, cold as Dian's kiss,
May a poor, humble mortal speak with thee?

One who has bowed herself perpetually
Before thine altar and poured wine and oil,
And worshiped thee with first-fruits of her toil.
Adored and beautiful Pomona, lo!

I have seen all thy suitors come and go.

Thou art more loved than was Penelope,
Or radiant Helen stolen across the sea
By Paris. Yet to all thou sayest 'Nay.'

Dost thou not fear that Venus on some day
Of bitter reckoning will drive thee hence?"

And when she says: "But what is mine offense?"

Say thou, "Alas! To punish every heart
That knows not love hath Venus sworn. Depart
From cruel ways or take thy punishment!"

And when Pomona's ear to thee is lent
Tell her: Of many suitors there was one
True beyond all the rest. Sure as the sun
And stars, Vertumnus named.

VERTUMNUS

Oh, wondrous!

CAMILLA

Say

That he—alas! alas!—hath gone away.
And then——

VERTUMNUS

And then——

CAMILLA

I need not tell to thee
What Gods say, meeting opportunity.

*[Exit Camilla. Enter Pomona. She comes
toward her altar, and stands by it.]*

VERTUMNUS

Goddess of orchards, fair Pomona, take
A humble vineyard offering for my sake.

POMONA

Good mother, laden be thy apple trees
With ruddy fruitage, for thy gift doth please.

VERTUMNUS

May a poor, humble woman speak with thee?
One who has bowed herself perpetually
Before thine altar and poured wine and oil
And worshiped thee with first-fruits of her toil.
Adored and beautiful Pomona, lo!
I have seen all thy suitors come and go.

Thou are more loved than was Penelope
Or radiant Helen stolen across the sea
By Paris. Yet to all thou sayest, "Nay."
Dost thou not fear that Venus on some day
Of bitter reckoning will drive thee hence?

POMONA

What should I fear? For what is mine offense!

VERTUMNUS

Dost thou not know? To punish every heart
That knows not love hath Venus sworn. Depart
From cruel ways or take thy punishment.

POMONA

Good mother, thou dost startle me.

VERTUMNUS

Relent,

And choose a lover.

POMONA

Ah, which one? Which one?

He must be true.

VERTUMNUS

True as the shining sun
'And stars Vertumnus was.

POMONA

I scorn him.

114 THE MASQUE OF POMONA

VERTUMNUS

Yea,
Then all is well. For he hath gone away.

POMONA

Gone? Ah, what meanest thou?

VERTUMNUS

All that I said.
In vain he gave thee love. In vain he plead.
Comely he was, yet worshiped only thee,
Where will ye find again such constancy?

POMONA

(*faintly*)

Alas! I know not! Mortal, lend thine aid!
(*Leans on Vertumnus*)

VERTUMNUS

Yea, Goddess.

POMONA

Ah, it seems as if this glade
Grew black with loss of him. No more, no more
To see him——

(*Runs to altar, arms outstretched in supplication*)

Oh, great Venus, I implore——
I pray thy pity! Send him back to me!
Cruel I was, yet meant not cruelty.

Because I did not know till he was gone
How well I loved him, or what luster shone
On life when he was with me!

VERTUMNUS

(throwing off his black cloak)

He is here!

POMONA

Vertumnus! Guardian of the Turning Year,
Turn not away again, lest I shall end
As Echo did! *(Runs to altar)*
Venus, my thanks I send!

VERTUMNUS

Not Venus, but another counseled me.

POMONA

What dost thou mean?

VERTUMNUS

Pomona, wise are we,
Yet wiser are the mortals, for they know
How to contend with fate and conquer woe.
He who gives over with the race half won
Might have been victor, had he only run!

*[From the background comes the procession
bearing bowls of milk and bowls of figs.
These they place on altar. They see Po-*

mona standing with Vertumnus' arm about her, and coming down, kneel before her. She extends her arms in blessing. One of the bolder of the maidens kisses the hem of her robe. Then, with oaten pipes playing, and maidens strewing flowers before them, Pomona and Vertumnus leave the stage, left.

CHORUS

(singing as they go)

Thou by sylvan gods held dear,
Who art worshiped far and near,
From Ostia to Dodona,
Smile on vineyard and on field,
'And the fruit our orchard yield.
Hear our prayer, Pomona!

THE MASQUE ENDS

A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

CHARACTERS

GERDA
PREBEN
KAREN
ERICK
THEIR MOTHER
THE SPIRIT OF GIVING
THE SPIRIT OF GETTING
THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY
THE SOUL OF GREED
THE SOUL OF SELFISHNESS
THE VOICE OF THE BELL
Neighbors. Carol-singers. Children.

A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

PLACE: *A little village in Denmark.*

TIME: *The Middle Ages.*

SCENE I. *A room in Erick's house.*

SCENE II. *At the Spirit of Getting's.*

SCENE III. *At Erick's home, same as Scene I.*

SCENE I

Before the curtain rises carol-singers are heard singing in chorus.

Over road and hill and town

Snow lies white as fleece.

'Tis the eve of Christmas.

'Tis the time of Peace.

Peace upon the forest,

Peace upon the field.

On this night, holy night,

Joy shall be revealed.

The curtain rises and gives to view an interior hung with brown drapery. When these draperies are parted by the players entering at center, an outer curtain of deep, midnight blue is seen. The center entrance is the only one used.

'At right, background, there is a Christmas tree, decked with a few candles and simple gifts. Near this a low wooden stool which can be used as a seat

At left a charcoal brazier, with a ruddy fire. Near it another low stool. The room is shadowy. The only light comes from the brazier, which makes the highest spot of color in the picture.

On the stool near the tree sits Karen, a child of ten. Preben, a very little boy, sits near the brazier. Gerda, a girl of fourteen, stands near Karen, her face uplifted, listening.

KAREN

Oh, Gerda——

GERDA

Listen! Hush!

THE CAROL-SINGERS

In the stable rises

Silv'ry breath of kine,

On our trees and altars

Christmas candles shine!

From the steeples sweetly

Christmas carols ring,

Therefore, friends and neighbors,

Give ye praise and sing:

(Softly)

Peace upon the forest,

Peace upon the field—

On this night, holy night,

Joy shall be revealed!

GERDA

Hark! (*All is still*) They are gone!
[*Suddenly a voice, high and clear, intoning like
a bell, swings across the silence of the dusk.*]

THE VOICE OF THE BELL

Listen well!

Listen well!

I cry to your souls through the voice of the bell,
Clear, clear!

Heed and hear!

Give! And the Spirit of Joy shall draw near!

Listen well!

Listen well!

I cry to your souls through the voice of the bell!

KAREN

Gerda [e. [e] [e]. what voice was that?

GERDA

(*rapt*)

I do not know.

It sounded strange and clear and rapturous sweet

As if it choired up to the very stars!

I wish that it would sound again. But all

Is quiet, and the streets are very still.

'Tis as if Twilight stole on noiseless feet

Past all the little doors and whispered: "Hush!"

PREBEN

'And is the tree all trimmed, then, Gerda?

GERDA

Yes,

'All trimmed, dear Preben. And the gifts are hung
For Mother and for us.
And our good neighbors. They are simple gifts
'And yet they seem quite fine upon the tree.
The wood that Hans hath carved. And gingerbread
With gilding on it!

KAREN

Yes, and nuts and herbs,
'And baskets made of tree-bark.

GERDA

Strings of cones—
Pine cones, as brown as Autumn.

PREBEN

And a toy—
'A little toy I painted all myself!

GERDA

(snatching him up and kissing him)
Thou little rabbit! Now for all who come
We have a gift, e'en though the gift be small.
How we have toiled the winking firelight knows!

KAREN

Because we had no pennies in our purse!

GERDA

Fingers were made before men thought of gold,
And fingers can work wonders when they must!
Besides, our neighbors know that we are poor,
And they are poor themselves. They'll judge our gifts
By all the love we've measured into them:
Not by the gifts themselves.

PREBEN

I wish 'twere time

To light the candles!

GERDA

Nay, ere night-time falls
There are some gifts that we must take abroad—
 (Takes gifts from lower branches of tree)
One for blind Marta—one for crippled Hans—
Who cannot come to share our Christmas tree.

KAREN

(eagerly)

Oh, let us wait till Erick goes with us!
For it is time that he should be at home!

(Listens)

That is his step! He's coming now! He's coming!
 *[Erick enters, a lad of twelve or so, with a
 bundle of fagots.]*

124 A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

'Tis he! 'Tis Erick! (*Runs to him*) What hath
kept thee, brother?

ERICK

(*throwing down fagots*)

The drifts—the fagots—and a wondrous tale
Lame Hans was telling me about a Spirit
Who's called the Spirit of Christmas joy.

KAREN

(*eagerly*)

Yes! Yes!

Oh, tell us!

[*They sit round Erick at brazier.*]

ERICK

Ever at the Christmas season
She roams the earth. If we could only find her——

GERDA

What is she like?

ERICK

Oh, she is very lovely.
“A crown of stars,” Hans said, “a long white robe—
A mantle such as the royal wear.”

KAREN

Oh,

Can it be true?

ERICK

All things are true at Christmas.
This very night I shall start forth to find her—
This very night I'll go to see the Spirit
Of Christmas Joy.

[As he has been talking, and unseen by him or the other children, a tall, cloaked, and hooded figure has entered. When she speaks her voice rings clear and sweet as a bell.]

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Why fare so far, young Erick?
Such Spirits are often nearer than you dream.

PREBEN

(half frightened)

Gerda! *(He clings to her)*

GERDA

It is some wander woman, Erick.
(Erick steps forward as host)
Come in. We did not hear you when you entered.
(They make way at fire)
The night draws chill. Will you not stay and rest?
[The Spirit of Giving stands at fire, warming her hands.]

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Your home is bright with welcome, and your tree
 Has branches like to beckoning fingers.
 Yea, e'en the fire burns like a ruddy heart.
 Here's rest and peace and warmth and kindliness.
 I have seen palaces not half so fair
 As this sweet room. (*She crosses slowly to fire*)

ERICK

Who think you she may be?

GERDA

I cannot tell. I do not know. Some stranger.

KAREN

Her eyes are like our mother's eyes. They have
 Deep stars of love in them.

GERDA

(*at tree*)

Our Christmas cakes
 'Are done. Will you not have one?

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Later, child.

I may not take ere I have given. (*To Erick*) And so
 To you, a Christmas rose. (*Gives him a rose*).

ERICK

(*delighted*)

To keep?

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

(*her eyes on him*)

Or give,

As pleases you.

ERICK

I thank you from my heart.

PREBEN

(*child-like*)

Oh, Erick, let me have it.

ERICK

(*selfishly*)

Preben, no.

I'll keep it for myself. It shall be placed
In water and I'll stand it near the tree.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

(*gravely*)

My roses do not fade.

KAREN

(*aside to Gerda*)

What can she mean,—

Roses that do not fade?

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

And would you guess
 My name, and who I am? Child, I am called
 The Spirit of Giving. Yet there be some
 Who know me by another title——

ERICK

Look !

*[All turn and perceive the richly-robed Spirit
 of Getting, who has entered unannounced.*
 'Another guest! (*He goes forward*) I do not know
 your name.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(smiling on him winningly)

Spirit of Getting am I called, and I
 Can fill your Christmas full of mirth and cheer.

ERICK

(indicating the Spirit of Giving)

Do you not know each other?

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(haughtily)

Nay, we are
 The bitterest of enemies. I'll bide
 Close by the fire.

(She sweeps to fire, and warms her hands)

ERICK

(fascinated)

Be welcome. Stay and rest.

(He stands near her)

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

I do not feel at home beneath this roof,
Save when I look on thee. Draw near. Draw near.

ERICK

(gazing at her)

The jewels on thy robe—they shine like stars——!

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Will you receive such gems at Christmas time?

ERICK

Nay, we be poor, and I shall only have
Poor gifts as guerdon from the Christmas tree.
I would I might have more.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(nodding)

'Tis well to wish!

*[The other children have been talking with
the Spirit of Giving in pantomime. Now
they approach the Spirit of Getting.]*

GERDA

We come to crave your pardon——

KAREN

(interrupting)

We must go

For a few moments only——

GERDA

We must bring

Gifts to lame Hans—and Marta who is blind——

Or else they'll think that they have been forgot.

Will you not wait, and we will soon return.

Come, Erick, you must add your greeting, too.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(to Erick)

What has blind Marta ever given you?

And crippled Hans, has he made you a gift?

Tell them you will not go. Stay here with me

And I will make you see your Christmas Eve

In a new guise.

ERICK

But I——

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Why should you give?

'Tis better far to gain, believe me. Nay,

Stay thou with me. Tell them thou wilt not go.

ERICK

(to the other children)

'Twould be discourteous in me to leave.
I will not go. I'll stay here,—by the fire.

GERDA

But, Erick, when lame Hans doth love thee so——

ERICK

I will not go, I tell thee. Let me be.

GERDA

(sorrowfully)

Come, Karen.

*[The children pick up their cloaks from beside
the tree.]*

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

(to Gerda)

Wilt thou let me go with thee,
'And I will take thy basket?
*[Exeunt Gerda, Preben, Karen, and The Spirit
of Giving.]*

ERICK

They are gone!
And something like a cord pulls at my heart!
*(For an instant he looks disturbed and irresolute,
and then turns to the Spirit of Getting)*

132 A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

Lame Hans was telling me a wondrous tale.
That was his gift to me.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

A sorry gift!

ERICK

And as he spoke I longed to find the Spirit
Of Christmas Joy

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Come with me. We will find her.

For I am fain to have you near me, Erick.

ERICK

(*wonderingly*)

How did you find this house and learn my name?

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

You wished me here.

ERICK

What mean you?

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Yea, you called me,

And so I came. Dear Erick, follow me,
And I will show you mirth and Christmas Joy.

Follow, and you shall have a hundred gifts.

Follow, and I will fill your purse with gold.

[She moves towards the center exit, and Erick slowly follows her, putting his cloak and cap on.]

ERICK

Yea, I will follow for the sake of gifts.

Yea, I will follow for the sake of gold.

But most of all I'll follow thee because

From thee I'll learn the way to Christmas Joy.

[As he pauses at center exit the voice speaking as with the peal of a bell is heard once more.]

Listen well,

Listen well!

I cry to your soul through the voice of the bell!

Clear, clear!

Heed and hear!

Give! And the Spirit of Joy will draw near.

Listen well!

Listen well!

I cry to your souls through the voice of the bell!

[While the voice has been speaking Erick has followed The Spirit of Joy out the center exit, and the curtain slowly falls.]

SCENE II

The home of the Spirit of Getting.

When the curtain rises it is discovered that where the Christmas tree stood is now a long table with a yellow cloth on it edged with gold. On the table are huge dishes of fruit, jelly, tarts, cream-puffs, cakes, flagons of wine, goblets, gold and silver plates, candles in sconces, etc., etc. A brazier stands at left, but more toward background. When the curtains at the center exit are parted, vivid orange outer draperies are seen, and the figures who enter are silhouetted against it.

The Soul of Gluttony, very plump and ruddy, and dressed in bright blue and yellow, sits drinking from a bowl that half-hides his face. After the rise of the curtain there is a knocking without. Gluttony has just taken a bite out of a cake. He puts it down reluctantly.

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

Plague take it! There was one more bite to eat,
And I must leave it.

(He rises, holds cake up and looks at it adoringly)

Ah, thou merry one,
Thou winkest at me with thy raisin eyes!

(Takes a bite)

The waggish cream-puff laughs until its sides

Crack and run over with sweet jollity!

(Licks up a bit of cream off puff)

How bland the custard looks! And how jocund

The luscious fruit-cake——

(Impatient knocking without)

Ah, I hear! I hear!

(He starts for the exit, looks back, and returns to gaze and then to fondle, unable to leave his heart's desire)

The bashful jelly trembles at my touch!

The cherries woo me like a maiden's lip!

(Furious knocking)

I come! I come!

(Again he pauses, waves to the things on table, kissing his fingers at them)

Sweetings, farewell to thee,

But for a moment.

[He parts the curtains, and is seen to reach out as if pulling a latch. He is always in sight of audience. The stage is not vacant for an instant.]

Enter the Spirit of Getting, followed by Erick, who looks wonderingly about him while The Spirit of Getting chides The Soul of Gluttony.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Would you have me stand

All night upon the threshold, Gluttony?

136 A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

I'll warrant you have stuffed your very ears
With tarts and cream-puffs!

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

Oh, those happy words!
They chime like music! And my heart responds!
(*He hurries back to table*)

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(*scornfully*)
Your *heart!* Your *heart!* It scarce can beat for fat!
You'll die of over-eating some fine day!

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

(*happily*)
And then I'll have a tombstone of white nougat
And my name writ thereon in candied almonds!

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Go to! (*To Erick*) Come in, and be thou welcome
here!
Is it not fair?

ERICK

I do not see a tree—
Not e'en a *little* tree with gifts on it.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

This is the place of getting, not of giving.
Gluttony, did you leave the door unlatched?

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

(his mouth full)

Yea. Yea. I did. It saveth breath and time.

[The Soul of Greed enters, an old man with a gray beard; small, fierce eyes; bushy brows; and a sack on his back. The Spirit of Getting turns and sees him.]

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Ah, welcome, Soul of Greed.

THE SOUL OF GREED

(in a cracked voice)

The night is cold.

And these, my sacks, be heavy. Let me sit
By thee *(crosses to table and joins Gluttony)*

And count up all the long day's gain!

ERICK

(to The Spirit of Getting)

I do not like his eyes. They frighten me.

THE SOUL OF GREED

(taking out gold pieces and counting them on table)

There is no season like the Christmas-tide
For counting all your treasures, one by one.

138 A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

Ah, if these dates and pears were gold pieces,
Then I'd be rich indeed!

*[The Soul of Selfishness enters. He is young
and finely garbed. His arms are full of
gifts which he does not offer to share.]*

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Give you fair greeting, Soul of Selfishness.
What kept ye late?

THE SOUL OF SELFISHNESS

Sooth, I was gathering gifts.
To celebrate the season. These are mine! (*Shows gifts*)
All mine!

*[They cross and take their places at table.
Erick sits facing audience. His plate is
soon heaped with dainties. But neither
gifts nor gold are given him.]*

THE SOUL OF GREED

(*staring at Erick*)

Who's this?

THE SOUL OF SELFISHNESS

A follower of Getting's.

THE SOUL OF GREED

Yet he looks mirthless.

A MASQUE OF CHRISTMAS

139

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

(seeking for the only panacea he knows)

Try another sweetmeat!

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Yea, when 'tis Christmas Eve, eat, drink, be merry.

ERICK

(speaking more to himself than to the others)

I know not why it is—I am not happy.

Though I have all I wish I am not happy.

At home on Christmas Eve, we stand together

About the tree, and sing—while here *(gulps back a sob)* while here——

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(ignoring Erick)

Dear Soul of Selfishness, though you be late,

At last we are all gathered here together.

ERICK

(suddenly starting up)

All? But where's the Spirit of Christmas Joy?

You said she would be with us. Answer me!

You said I'd find her.

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

No, I never said so.

ERICK

(passionately)

Yea, but you did. You said that you would help me
To search the world for her.

(Turns to Greed)

Oh, Soul of Greed,
Will you not help me? Ah, I pray you, aid me!

THE SOUL OF GREED

I've never seen the face of Christmas Joy.

ERICK

Oh, Soul of Gluttony, can you not tell me
How I shall find her?

THE SOUL OF GLUTTONY

Nay, I cannot tell thee.

Her name sounds unfamiliar to my ears.
Sweet Taste I know, and Spice and Seasoning,
But Joy hath never been beneath this roof
In all my memory.

ERICK

(with a cry)

I have been cheated!

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

Erick, believe me, there is no such being.

ERICK

There is! There is! Deep in my heart I feel it!
And lame Hans said so! And he could not lie!

THE SOUL OF GREED

(with chuckling malice)

Spirit of Getting, you are losing him!

ERICK

(with ardor)

I swear that I will not give up my quest!

THE SPIRIT OF GETTING

(warily)

Let us flout him, or he will soon flout us.

[Through the scene that follows they slip quietly out, unseen by Erick, who stands center, facing audience, arms outstretched.]

ERICK

Spirit of Christmas Joy, I call! I call
Upon your name this night, for I would find you.
You are not here beneath the roof of Getting,
Yet I will find you though I search the world!

(Turns: sees that he is left alone)

Ah! They are gone! And I am left alone!

(Calls)

Selfishness! Getting! Greed! They do not answer!

The road is dark! What shall I have to light me?
If I had but a flint—one spark to kindle!

*(Puts hand in his pocket and draws forth rose.
A light shines from it)*

Why, 'tis the rose! The Christmas rose she gave me!
She whose own name was Giving! Ah, how bright,
How wondrously it shines! 'Tis like a moonbeam!
It points the way before me! Will it lead?

*(The light from the rose shines as he turns toward
door)*

Yea! Then I'll follow! O sweet rose, lead on,
Until I find the Spirit of Christmas Joy!

*[As he starts to exit, The Spirit of Giving, a
shadowy figure, appears at the edge of the
parted stage curtains, which keep her out-
side, yet near the home of Getting. She
sings very softly and sweetly.]*

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Follow the ray,
With heart serene and humble,
Through the dark night.
Steep is the way,
Yet steps can never stumble
That follow—light!

*[Erick exits, The Spirit of Giving withdraws,
slowly, silently as a shadow, and the cur-
tain falls.]*

SCENE III

Erick's home.

At rise of curtain, Gerda, Preben, and Karen seated beneath tree. The lights are low, and the room in shadow, so that when Erick enters the light from the rose can still be seen shining for a moment before he puts it back in his wallet. Enter Erick.

ERICK

The rose . . . it led me! It led me home!

[General chorus from the children as they gather about him.]

GERDA

Oh, Erick, Erick! We've been back an hour!
And we were waiting. There was no one home!

PREBEN

What kept you, Erick?

GERDA

Brother, come and warm you!

ERICK

Oh, Gerda, home is very, very lovely!
I think there is no place so beautiful!

It is as if I saw it with new eyes.
Our little tree—with all the candles on it!
If I could only give something more precious
To our dear Mother than the cakes and herbs.
I know! I'll give my rose! My Christmas rose!
The Stranger-woman said that I might give it,
Yea, or might keep it as did please me best.
And so I choose to give.

(Fastens rose to tree)

Dear Christmas rose,
Fairest of all I've ever seen, shine brightly!

(Light shines from tree)

KAREN

Look! What a glory streams about the tree!

GERDA

'Tis beautiful! 'Tis more than candlelight!

ERICK

A moment since I felt no joy in Christmas,
Now I could cry for very happiness.

GERDA

(simply)

The Stranger-woman said that happiness
Was giving.

*[Music is heard without, faintly. It grows
nearer and clearer. The words are not dis-
tinguishable.]*

GERDA

Hark! Our neighbors drawing near!
Oh, Erick, Karen! Run and welcome them!

[As Erick and Karen run to center, the curtains part and young and old begin to enter. Erick's mother, and a group of women, some with children in their arms: an old man: two young girls: more children, and in their midst, The Spirit of Giving, still clad in a long gray robe. As they enter and take their places, stage background, they sing a continuation of the music heard ere their coming: carol-singers enter and reinforce with their voices.]

Christmas Eve hath come again—

On each house and steeple

Softly blue the twilight falls,

Veils the hurrying people.

See the little window-panes

With candlelight a-glowing,

While o'er roofs and winding streets

Softly it is snowing!

Ring, ring the Christmas bells,

Call good folk together;

For if all our hearts are warm,

What care we for weather?

ERICK

(to his mother)

O Mother, darling! We have a surprise!

KAREN

We've fashioned gifts for you!

ERICK

And for the neighbors!

NEIGHBORS' VOICES

Look! Look! The tree! The rose! The light!
Ah! Ah!

GERDA

And who shall give the gifts?

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Wilt thou let me,
E'en though I am a stranger?

*[As she stands the light shines very brightly
upon her. The plain gifts that were seen
in the first scene are now augmented by
gifts that sparkle gold and silver in the light.]*

NEIGHBORS

(falling on their knees)

Ah, the light
About her brow! It is a miracle!

ERICK

(awed)

Why, our poor gifts gleam gold and silver! Look!

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Love makes them shine for those who have the eyes
To see them rightly. Come, draw near, draw near.

*(She begins to distribute gifts from the tree,
Light follows her hand as she does so)*

May happiness be in each heart this night!
There is no gift that is too poor to give
If love be in the giving. (*To a mother*) Peace to thee,
(*To another*)

And unto thee.

(To a timid child)

Come, flitterling, and take
Thy gift. (*Child takes it*) And thou. And thou.
And thou.

A WOMAN

What radiance streams about her!

ANOTHER

And her face

Is like an angel's.

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

(to Erick's mother)

Wilt thou take this rose
That shines with Erick's love for thee?

NEIGHBORS

(murmuring)

Look! Look!

[The Spirit of Giving has loosened her gray robe. It falls back, and she is seen to have a white robe with a mantle of scarlet, and a crown of stars.]

ERICK

"A long white robe," Hans said, "A crown of stars.
"A mantle." Your name! Oh, tell me! Tell me!

THE SPIRIT OF GIVING

Spirit of Giving am I called. But some
Do call me by another title. Yea,
To eyes that see and ears that hear I am
The Spirit of Christmas Joy.

*[All look toward The Spirit of Christmas Joy,
who stands with hands outstretched in
greeting. The curtain falls.]*

END OF MASQUE

THE SUN GODDESS

(A Masque of Old Japan)

CHARACTERS

THE SUN GODDESS

USUMÉ, the Celestial Dancer

ITO, a Cynic Philosopher

HA SA, an Artisan

KOTO, a Priest

O KU RE, a Poet

AKIMO, a Young Man

O SANA SAN

HASU	}	Maidens
OSONO		
TOYA		

THE WILLOW MAIDEN

THE SOULS OF THE WISTARIA

THE RICE MAIDENS

THE SOULS OF THE APPLE BLOSSOMS

THE-SOUL-OF-ALL-THE-BUTTERFLIES

Other Maidens. Villagers. Children.

THE SUN GODDESS

The scene throughout the Masque is a woodland in old Japan. Pine trees at right, left, and background. Against the pines in background a stunted plum tree with white blossoms stands out sharply. At left there is a hillock rising abruptly out of the ground, its interior forming a cave. The mouth of the cave faces towards the right, and is curtained with swinging vines.

The opening of the Masque is marked by the entrance of Ha Sa from left, bearing with him the tools of his trade. He is a worker in metals, and has various flat brass and copper skillets for cooking. Also a large copper tray which he falls to polishing as soon as he is seated.

Enter from the right Ito, the cynic philosopher, book in hand. He speaks pleasantly to Ha Sa.

ITO

Ha Sa, what do you make?

HA SA

A mirror, Lord.

ITO

And what is that?

HA SA

Something to be adored
 By countless women. It reflects the face. (*Shows it*)
 The hair, the hands, the obi's subtle grace.
 Woman will love a mirror as her soul.

ITO

Hai! She has none. Like a lacquered bowl
 Is woman,—empty, shallow, colored bright,
 To lure the foolish like Fox Fires at night.
 I would not offer homage unto one
 For all the gold that lies beneath the sun.
 Women are vain! All women are vain!

HA SA

Ai!

ITO

(*turning*)

What is your plaint?

HA SA

Lord, I complain
 Against this august world and its strange ways:
 I am a-weary of the way they praise
 Artists. And poets. Men who only rhyme
 Some foolish words together till they chime.
 While those who fashion things of use and sense
 Obtain no praise, and little recompense.

[*Ha Sa sits moodily, left, facing audience, and
 polishing mirror. Ito sits philosophically*

right, reading in a book from which he does not turn, no matter what goes on about him. Both are at the very front of the stage, and remain there, like a Japanese chorus. Enter from right, like a gay rainbow, children, maidens, villagers, including Akimo, Toya, O Sana San, Hasu, and Osono. The children carry toys, and run to the front of the stage four abreast, singing an old Japanese charm:

CHILDREN

Oh, weather be clear!
Oh, weather be clear!
Sun Goddess, draw near!
Sun Goddess, draw near!

HA SA

(sourly)

Lord, will you join the worshipers?

ITO

Not I!

HA SA

Nor I!

[Toya comes down with some of the maidens.]

TOYA

(to Osono)

Osono, very like the sky
Your robe is!

OSONO

(looking back)

Hither comes the priest, Koto,
And all the villagers and maids we know.

*[The priest crosses at the back of the stage from
right to left, and disappears from view.]*

O SANA SAN

(explaining to a very little child)

We worship the Sun Goddess. At her feast
Shall gather here the highest and the least.

HASU

Now the warm months have come—sweet time of year,
When in the fields the tender herbs appear:
When honorable rice doth quickly grow,
Wistaria and cherry blossoms blow,
Above the flowery garment the fields wear
The august willow droops her long green hair,
And Usumé, celestial dancer, looks
To see her image in the silver brooks.

TOYA

Can any one the Sun Goddess behold?
The-Never-To-Be-Praised-Enough?

HASU
(wisely)

In gold

She cometh clad on her feast day
To look on mortals.

OSONO
Yea, the legends say
That sometimes on her feast-day she will pass
Like any maid across the flower-starred grass.

ONE OF THE VILLAGERS
Ai! We are prepared if she should come.
(*Indicating garlands and musicians*)
Flowers and musicians.

A CHILD
(gleefully)
And Taiko, the drum!

AKIMO
(piously)
The blessed light she sends to tree and vine!

ONE OF THE VILLAGERS
Come, it is time to worship at her shrine.
[*Villagers and maidens start to leave, slowly,
towards left: but are arrested by a cry from
Toya, who has seen the mirror Ha Sa is
making.*]

TOYA

Now by the Weaving Lady, what is here?
 Oh, I can see my image! 'Tis as clear
 As in still water!

HA SA

(dryly)

'Tis a mirror.

O SANA SAN

Look!

'Tis wonderful! 'Tis magic! Like a brook
 It shines!

*[All gather about in the greatest curiosity.
 Toya takes the mirror from Ha Sa and
 holds it up.]*

TOYA

So fair!

*[The Sun Goddess, clad in gold, enters from
 background. She pauses on observing the
 throng, and calls from center:]*

THE SUN GODDESS

Sweet maidens!

HASU

'(gazing eagerly in mirror, while Akimo gazes at her)'

Let me see!

THE SUN GODDESS

(*impatiently*)

I, the Sun Goddess, call ye!

OSONO

(*to Toya*)

Nay, let me

Set straight thy honorable hairpins!

VILLAGERS

(*with simple delight at Toya's beauty*)

Ah!

THE SUN GODDESS

(*in anger*)

I call!

Answer me!

O SANA SAN

(*to Hasu, who is fastening chrysanthemums in her hair*)

Fasten them, or they will fall!

THE SUN GODDESS

(*with a cry: outraged*)

Maidens!

THE SUN GODDESS

OSONO

(innocently)

Did some one call?

[All turn, and see the Sun Goddess. They are overcome with dismay.]

O SANA SAN

(with a gasp)

The Sun Goddess!

[All fall to their knees, and touch foreheads to the earth.]

HASU

Oh, August Lady——

THE SUN GODDESS

Now in woe and stress

Ye shall pay for this carelessness and slight.

I leave the world forever, and my light

Taken from earth means woe, and endless blight.

O SANA SAN

(as all remain kneeling)

'Augustness——

THE SUN GODDESS

Silence. To this cave I go,

There to abide. *(She moves toward left)*

HASU

(imploring)

Supremeness——

VILLAGERS

Woe! Ai! Woe!

[The Sun Goddess parts the vines of the cave, enters, and the vines hide her, though she can dimly be seen from entrance. She is observing what goes on outside. The people rise from their knees. Akimo goes towards background, where he meets the priest who enters from left. Akimo talks to him in pantomime, explaining what has happened. Meantime in foreground the maidens and villagers talk together.]

TOYA

(despairingly)

We shall have darkened days and endless rain
Unless we win the goddess back again.

A VILLAGER

(seeing priest)

The priest! With honored incense.

KOTO

Low in prayer

Let us now kneel, your folly to repair.

*(All fall on knees facing cave and touch the earth
with their foreheads)*

August and beautiful, we lose thy light
 And our souls die like the faint wind of night.
 Let not thy endless curse on us be hurled.
 Take not away the sunshine of the world.
 We pray thee to return. (*There is no answer*)

AKIMO

(*awed*)

She doth not stir! (*All rise*).

KOTO

Then let the little children plead with her.

[*All save the little children withdraw to right of stage, and stand watching. The children go near to the mouth of the cave. Leave their toys as an offering at one side of it, and then fall to their knees, put their little foreheads to the earth, and await a sign from the Sun Goddess. There is none. The children rise, and their elders come forward to meet them. General dejection has fallen on every one.*]

KOTO

(*gravely*)

She doth not answer. All the flowers will die—
 The trees—the harvests——

O SANA SAN

(*imploringly*)

Goddess, hear our cry!

THE SUN GODDESS

161

VOICES

(faintly from background)

And ours!

O SANA SAN

The souls of flowers

Draw nigh.

HASU

(from background)

All growing things

Come as with wings!

[Enter from right, toward background, The Willow Maiden, tall, dressed in slashed green representing the long leaves of the willow. Under the leaves her robe is a green mist. It is worn long and straight, not in Japanese fashion.]

TOYA

The Willow Maiden pleads

For all our needs!

(The Willow Maiden stands with arms outstretched towards the hidden Sun Goddess)

THE WILLOW MAIDEN

August, the Willow Maiden cries to thee.

Without thy light there will not be a tree.

(No answer)

She stirs not! Will her anger not abate?

[The Rice Maidens, all in white, with wisps

THE SUN GODDESS

of pale-green leaves about them, enter from left, toward background. The Willow Maiden gives place to them as they stand in supplication.

KOTO

Lo, the Rice Maidens come to supplicate!

FIRST RICE MAIDEN

(speaking for the others)

Without thy august presence the faint green
Of growing rice will never more be seen
By field or river's marge. Wilt thou forgive
The mortals' folly, and so bid us live?

(There is no answer)

She heeds not, though we prayed a lengthy while!

TOYA

(timidly)

An honorable dance might make her smile.

[The Priest nods gravely. The musicians begin to play, and the Rice Maidens dance, ending the dance with arms outstretched in supplication. There is no answer. The Rice Maidens withdraw and stand at right. The Souls of the Wistaria enter clad in pale purple, over which swing long green vines with the blossoms of the Wistaria on them.]

KOTO

The Souls of the Wistaria!

A SOUL OF THE WISTARIA

(speaking for the others)

We pray

Thou wilt not take from us the light of day!

(They dance before the Sun Goddess: but she does not answer)

Ai! Ai! She will not look nor hear!

*They retire to right, near the Rice Maidens.
Enter from background the Souls of the
Cherry Blossoms, like a pale-pink mist.*

KOTO

The Souls of Cherry Blossoms now appear
To dance for her.*[The Souls of the Cherry Blossoms weave a
dance before the Sun Goddess, strewing
pink petals as they do so. But she makes no
answer.]*

OSONO

(sorrowfully)

She doth not even stir!

*[There enters from background a figure dressed
in midnight blue, with a robe of royal blue
caught to her hands. When the arms are
lifted it is seen that this robe is painted*

with gorgeous purpled eyes, and veined with gold. It is The-Soul-of-All-the-Butterflies.

THE-SOUL-OF-ALL-THE-BUTTERFLIES

I am The-Soul-of-All-the-Butterflies
Pleading to thee. Ah, great one, hear our cries!
Supremeness! Lo, without thy light we perish!

(There is no answer)

[The-Soul-of-All-the-Butterflies slowly withdraws and joins the Souls of the Cherry Blossoms. A moment afterwards a figure in celestial blue and silver comes from background in Japanese dress, with silver obi. She comes directly to the cave, and speaks sweetly, but with less of supplicating humbleness than the others. It is Usumé.]

USUMÉ

Great Sun Goddess, no more thine anger cherish.
I, the Celestial Dancer, come to plead
For these poor mortals, and their bitter need,
And I will plead in dancing. Augustness, pray
Look forth and see the dance of Usumé,
As light as foam on honorable wave!

(Usumé dances, but the Sun Goddess gives no answer)
She doth not heed me! And I cannot save!

[Usumé withdraws to right, the people making obeisance as she passes.]

HASU

(wailing)

Without the august shining of her light
We are condemned to everlasting night!

AKIMO

We perish utterly. The sands are run.
We must cry *Sayonara* to the sun!

USUMÉ

(to Koto)

Send quickly for the poet, O Ku Re:
His gift of words may be an aid to thee.

[Koto turns to Akimo, and gives him the message in pantomime, while the four erring maidens once more prostrate themselves before the angered goddess. Exit Akimo swiftly, right.]

O SANA SAN

Goddess, have mercy on us, and forgive.
Supremeness! Pity! Let thy suppliants live.

HASU

We meant not disrespect. 'Twas carelessness.

TOYA

Oh, More-Than-Golden-One, heed our distress.

[There is no answer. The Maidens rise as

*O Ku Re, the poet, enters in great haste,
followed by Akimo.*

O KU RE

(to Koto)

Why hast thou sent for me, oh, Excellent One?

KOTO

O Ku Re, grievous rudeness hath been done
To the Sun Goddess, and she hath withdrawn
Into that cave. She, who doth bring the dawn
And shines all day, hath taken away the sun.

O KU RE

But how came all this folly to be done?

TOYA

(wailing and indicating mirror which Ha Sa holds)
We looked in this, and could not turn away!

MAIDENS

(with great sorrow)

Ai! Ai!

KOTO

O is there not some way
To lure the radiant goddess of the sky
Out of that cave?

O KU RE

Excellence, I will try.

*(He goes swiftly to Ha Sa, takes the mirror
from him, and holding it before the cave,
improvises verses)*

Golden as the light of noon,
Slender as the crescent moon,
Sweet as Spring winds blowing through
Tossing forests of bamboo.
Goddess, do not hide the light
Of thy beauty from our sight.

*(The vines that shadow the cave stir: it is evident
that the Goddess listens)*

Couldst thou see what thou hast taken
Pity in thy heart would waken.
(He tilts the mirror enticingly: the vines stir yet more)
If my words can reach thy heart,
Look and see how fair thou art.

*(The slender fingers of the Goddess part the vines:
she looks out and faces the mirror)*

Hands like two white butterflies
Stir the vines that hide her eyes.
Honorable star-shine seems
Dull beside her eyes' bright gleams.

*(The Sun Goddess gazes at the mirror entranced.
O Ku Re steps backward, holding the mir-
ror before the Sun Goddess. She uncon-
sciously follows him)*

August cherry hangs its head
At thy lips' celestial red!

*(As the Sun Goddess is drawn further and further
away from the cave, maidens run softly to
the front of the cave, blocking its entrance
so that the Sun Goddess cannot return to it)*

Brow far whiter than a cloud;
E'en the mirror speaks aloud:
"Since I have reflected thee
Let none other look in me!"

*[O Ku Re lowers the mirror and faces the Sun
Goddess.]*

MURMURS OF THE PEOPLE

She comes! Augustness! Will she smile?

THE SUN GODDESS

(hearing them, but speaking to O Ku Re)

Yea, lord.

All is forgiven. *(To the people)* Sunlight is restored
To all the earth. *(General delight)* Sweet poet, thou
shalt be

My poet always. Thou shalt sing of me
Throughout Japan.

O KU RE

(bowing low)

Yea, Great Imperialness!

Koto

Maidens, bring garlands for the Sun Goddess!
Goddess and Poet! Let the Kingdom ring
With all the august praises we shall sing!

(Maidens strew flowers in front of the Sun Goddess)

[O Ku Re gives the mirror to Toya, who returns it quickly to Ha Sa. The Sun Goddess, attended by the poet, O Ku Re, exits, center background, with the Souls of the Flowers attending her, and the villagers following her. The stage is left vacant save for Ito and Ha Sa, who still sit at right and left like stone gods.]

HA SA

(sourly)

Lord, to success the way lies very clear.
Say to thy listeners what they long to hear.
I made the mirror: but he gets the gain.

Ito

(with supreme disgust)

Goddess or mortal, all women are vain!

THE MASQUE ENDS

MASQUE COSTUMES

MASQUE COSTUMES

As the poetic drama has almost vanished from our stage the Masque and pageant remain the only form of dramatic art where the costumes may intrigue the imagination by their color, their line, their poetic significance, or historic suggestion. Here the dramatic designer is free to experiment with rich, opulent color schemes or with cool, dim Monet-like effects, both mediums being obtained through the simplest possible means.

In costuming the Masques which this volume contains absolute freedom has been given the producer. That costumes are chosen with reference to their background is too well-known an axiom to need further comment. Therefore, it is not always the producer who reigns supreme in choosing the dramatic designs: the scene setting is the supreme dictator. If the Masque is to be given out of doors against a green background with strong effects of sunlight and shadow, it will require quite a different color scheme from the Masque that is played against a background of nut-brown curtains. So, too, a Masque that is acted out of doors, against the red and gold of Autumn, will require quite another color scheme from the Masque that is staged in the open in midsummer.

A few suggestions for the individual Masques included in this volume follow herewith.

As has been suggested, the Court in "The Forest Princess" wear dully gorgeous colors; the peasant groups wear warm earth colors: the *Tree Spirits* wear green. Imagination can be brought to bear on the varying green. *The Pine* in dark green; the *Spirit of the Poplar*, faint green, a-twinkle with faint-green leaves that have a silver lining. *The Birch* in green, with girdle of white flecked with brown, to represent birch-bark. *The Locust* can have pale-brown buds, the *Maple* scarlet and yellow tassels, and so on. *The Princess* should wear deep rich rose; *Prince Aladore*, rich blue, tattered and weather-streaked; *Prince Ulric*, rich purple with orange glints.

For "The Gift of Time" some of the costumes have already been indicated. The *Mortal* may wear a white tunic with a blue over-robe. The costumes for the *Hours* have been suggested. The costumes for the *Months* may be as follows: A kingly white robe edged with ermine and silver, for *January*. *February* may be a cowed figure in a gray robe and over-robe. The over-robe is lined in pale blue. *March* may be a youth in a brown shepherd's tunic, with sandals laced in brown, and a leather girdle. A sheep-skin or short robe of dark fur hung from his shoulders. A pipe on which he blows. *April* may be a young girl, in a pale-green robe, with a crown of little new leaves on her hair, and a silver girdle. *May* could be impersonated by a young girl in a white robe with an apple-

green over-robe lined in apple-blossom pink. Carries a blossoming bough in her hand. *June* wears a pale-pink robe, with a dark-green girdle. A green over-robe lined in apple-blossom pink. A wreath of roses in her hair, and a long-stemmed rose in her hand. *July* may be a woman in a robe of strong rose color, rose scarlet. In her arms a sheaf of wheat, oats, barley, that is almost ripe. *August* may be a woman clad in wheat-yellow, with a crown of wheat on her hair, and some cornstalks in her hand. *September* may be a woman in dark corn-yellow, with a brown over-robe, and in her hand goldenrod and purple asters. *October* may be a youth in bright yellow with a scarlet over-robe. He is crowned with a chaplet of scarlet and yellow leaves. He carries a wide, shallow bowl of orange-yellow heaped high with red apples, purple grapes, and plums. *November* is a man in brown, with a dark cloud-purple over-robe. He carries a leafless branch in his hand. *December* is a man in flowing white robes, austere and dignified. He wears a rich crimson over-robe, and a white frosty crown with a single silver star. *The New Year* wears a white tunic and a laurel crown.

The costumes for "The Masque of Conservation" have been more fully indicated than any of the others. They should be designed always with a view to having them light and flowing in line and substance. They are essentially Greek.

The costumes for "The Masque of Pomona" have

also been fully indicated, and are Roman in their simplicity and color.

The costumes for "A Christmas Masque" are medieval and Danish, but this can be suggested rather than given in totality. There should simply be the effect of peasant and morality play costumes. *Karen* wears a peasant dress of dark green; *Gerda* a peasant dress of plum color; *Preben* a peasant suit of warm saffron-brown. *Erick* wears blue, rather bright, and has a gray cloak for his outdoor adventuring. *The Spirit of Giving* wears warm gray, and when this robe falls back it reveals her dressed in a robe of rich, warm crimson. *The Spirit of Getting* wears yellow, trimmed with black fur. The costume of *Gluttony* is indicated in the text. It should give the suggestion of a fool's costume, lacking only the bells. *Greed* wears slate-gray. The neighbors who sing carols wear blues, browns, purples, and black.

The costumes for "The Sun Goddess" are fully indicated, and run the gamut of the color scale.

For color schemes both quiet and gorgeous, Boutet de Monvel's *Jeanne D'Arc* is always a help; and for black-and-white drawings, with suggestions for fairy or symbolic costumes, as well as for patterns and discussion of material, there is C. D. Mackay's *Costumes and Scenery for Amateurs*.

MASQUE MUSIC

MASQUE MUSIC

The mood of the Masque is so largely created by the music that accompanies it that a few suggestions are given here, though it is keenly realized that the dramatic director will have ideas along these lines, and is in small need of assistance.

The ideal musical setting for a Masque is one that is written around the theme of the Masque, reflecting all that the Masque strives to show. But if this music is obtainable only in manuscript form, a difficulty rises in the path of the producer. It is, therefore, better to take music already published and easily available in any part of the country.

The music suggested here will fit the requirements of either small or symphony orchestras, since it is scored for both. It can even be had for a piano and a few strings. Simple music has been chosen purposely; but the shimmering difficulties of a Debussy, a Ravel, or a Strauss can be easily substituted by the director who is blessed with an orchestra that can master these technicalities. But the list suggested here is *average* music for *average* orchestra.

The musical setting for "The Forest Princess" may be as follows: The entrance of the Court to the March from *Aïda*. For the peasant dances, Edward German's *Henry Eighth Suite*. For the Summons to the Spirits

of the Trees the second part of Weber's *Overture to Euyranthe*. The Tree Spirits also enter to this. For their dance about the cradled Princess, *Idyllo*, by Theodore Lack. For the sorrowful withdrawal of all from stage, Gounod's *Funeral March of a Marionette*. For the dance of the lords and ladies of the Court, Grieg's *Saraband* from the *Holberg Suite*. For the dance of the Spirits of the Trees in the third act, Dvorak's *Humoresque*. For music for the exit of all the characters from the stage, *The Kiss Waltz*, by Arditi.

As setting for "The Gift of Time" (the Christmas Masque), the following is suggested. For the dance of the Hours, *The Dance of the Hours* from *La Gioconda*. For the dance of the Months, *The Scarf Dance*, by Chaminade.

The music for "The Masque of Conservation" may be as follows: For first dance of the Dryads *The Waltz of the Hours*, from the *Ballet Coppelia*, by Leo Delibes. For the second dance, *The Pizzicati Polka*, from the *Ballet Sylvia*, by Leo Delibes. For the entrance of the broken Dryads and the mournful River Gods, *The Death of Ase*, from the *Peer Gynt Suite*, by Grieg. For the final dance of joy, Mendelssohn's *Spring Song*.

For the "Masque of Pomona," the shepherd dance may be the *Shepherd Dance* from the *Henry Eighth Suite*, by Edward German; the dance by maidens, *The Barcarolle* from *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

For curtain music to "A Masque of Christmas"

have a medley of Danish folk-dance airs, and for the carol setting use the hymn which can be found in any Episcopal hymnbook, beginning, "Now the day is over, Night is drawing nigh."

For the "Masque of The Sun Goddess" use the *Mikado* music from Gilbert and Sullivan's opera of that name. It may not be truly Japanese, but it is actable and danceable.

BOOKS OF PLAYS FOR YOUNG FOLK

DESIGNED FOR USE IN THE SCHOOLS

By CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

PATRIOTIC PLAYS AND PAGEANTS

PAGEANT OF PATRIOTISM (Outdoor):—Prologue by the Spirit of Patriotism, *Princess Pocahontas, Pilgrim Interlude, Ferry Farm Episode, *George Washington's Fortune, *Daniel Boone: Patriot, Benjamin Franklin Episode, Abraham Lincoln Episode, Final Tableau, March of Players.

PAGEANT OF PATRIOTISM (Indoor) a variation of the above.

HAWTHORNE PAGEANT (for Outdoor or Indoor Production):—Chorus of Spirits of the Old Manse, Prologue by the Muse of Hawthorne, First Episode (In Witchcraft Days), Dance Interlude, Second Episode (Merrymount), Procession of Player Folk.

The portions of the pageants marked with a star (*) are separate, one-act plays especially suitable for separate performance in school and home. There are full directions for simple costumes, scenes, and staging. 12mo.

THE HOUSE OF THE HEART

Short plays in verse to be acted by children of fourteen or younger.

INCLUDES:—"The House of the Heart" (Morality Play)—"The Enchanted Garden" (Flower Play—"A Little Pilgrim's Progress" (Morality Play—"A Pageant of Hours" (To be given Out of Doors)—"On Christmas Eve." "The Elf Child." "The Princess and the Pixies." "The Christmas Guest." (Miracle Play.) Etc.

"An addition to child drama which has been sorely needed."—*Boston Transcript*.

THE SILVER THREAD

And Other Folk Plays.

CONTENTS:—"The Silver Thread" (Cornish); "The Forest Spring" (Italian); "The Foam Maiden" (Celtic); "Troll Magic" (Norwegian); "The Three Wishes" (French); "A Brewing of Brains" (English); "Siegfried" (German); "The Snow Witch" (Russian).

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

TWO BOOKS BY CONSTANCE D'ARCY MACKAY

COSTUMES AND SCENERY FOR AMATEURS

A Practical Working Handbook with over 70 illustrations and full index. 258 pp. 12mo.

A book that has long been needed. It concludes chapters on Amateurs and the New Stage Art, Costumes, and Scenery, but consists mainly of simple outline designs for costumes for historical plays, particularly American Pageants, folk, fairy, and romantic plays—also of scenes, including interiors, exteriors, and a scheme for a Greek Theatre, all drawn to scale. Throughout the book color schemes, economy, and simplicity are kept constantly in view, and ingenious ways are given to adapt the same costumes or scenes to several different uses.

HOW TO PRODUCE CHILDREN'S PLAYS

The author is a recognized authority on the production of plays and pageants in the public schools, and combines enthusiastic sympathy with sound, practical instructions. She tells both how to inspire and care for the young actor, how to make costumes, properties, scenery, where to find designs for them, what music to use, etc., etc. She prefaces it all with an interesting historical sketch of the plays-for-children movement, includes elaborate detailed analyses of performances of Browning's *Pied Piper* and Rosetti's *Pageant of the Months*, and concludes with numerous valuable analytical lists of plays for various grades and occasions.

New York Times Review: "It will be useful . . . practical advice."

Magazine of General Federation of Women's Clubs: "There seems to be nothing she has forgotten to mention. Every club program chairman should have it."

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS
NEW YORK

SHORT PLAYS ABOUT FAMOUS AUTHORS (Goldsmith, Dickens, Heine, Fannie Burney, Shakespeare)

BY MAUDE MORRISON FRANK.

THE MISTAKE AT THE MANOR shows the fifteen-year-old Goldsmith in the midst of the humorous incident in his life which later formed the basis of "She Stoops to Conquer."

A CHRISTMAS EVE WITH CHARLES DICKENS reveals the author as a poor factory boy in a lodging-house, dreaming of an old-time family Christmas.

WHEN HEINE WAS TWENTY-ONE dramatizes the early disobedience of the author in writing poetry against his uncle's orders.

MISS BURNEY AT COURT deals with an interesting incident in the life of the author of "Evelina" when she was at the Court of George III.

THE FAIRIES' PLEA, which is an adaptation of Thomas Hood's poem, shows Shakespeare intervening to save the fairies from the scythe of Time.

Designed in general for young people near enough to the college age to feel an interest in the personal and human aspects of literature, but the last two could easily be handled by younger actors. They can successfully be given by groups or societies of young people without the aid of a professional coach.

LITTLE PLAYS FROM AMERICAN HISTORY, FOR YOUNG FOLKS

BY ALICE JOHNSTONE WALKER.

HIDING THE REGICIDES, a number of brief and stirring episodes, concerning the pursuit of Colonels Whalley and Goff by the officers of Charles II at New Haven in old colony days.

MRS. MURRAY'S DINNER PARTY, in three acts, is a lively comedy about a Patriot hostess and British Officers in Revolutionary Days.

SCENES FROM LINCOLN'S TIME; the martyred President does not himself appear. They cover Lincoln's helping a little girl with her trunk, women preparing lint for the wounded, a visit to the White House of an important delegation from New York, and of the mother of a soldier boy sentenced to death—and the coming of the army of liberation to the darkies.

Tho big events are touched upon, the mounting of all these little plays is simplicity itself, and they have stood the test of frequent school performance.

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY
PUBLISHERS NEW YORK

Date Due

MAY 19

MSB
b6c
N3

10172

Mackay, C.D.

The forest princess
and other masques

Fort Hays Kansas State College

LIBRARY

TY BUREAU CAT. NO. 1166.3

